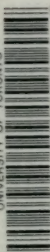



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THE PLAYS  
OF  
EURIPIDES



~~1894~~ INTRODUCTION.

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OF

# EURIPIDES

[B.C. 455 TO B.C. 408]

I

ALCESTIS, AND OTHER PLAYS

II

THE BACCHANALS, AND OTHER PLAYS →

III

HECUBA, AND OTHER PLAYS

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY HENRY MORLEY

LL.D., EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

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ninety-two tragedies, of which fifteen were successful. There remain to us eighteen.

In these plays there is a philosophic spirit showing life in action, with keen human sympathies. Euripides was once accused of impiety in a court of justice, and his faith in the gods of Greece had doubts and reservations that a hostile critic could detect. He realized to his own mind the legendary characters, and painted them as human beings really are. As Aristotle said, Sophocles painted men as they ought to be ; Euripides painted them as they are.

Of the plays given in this volume, "Alcestis" was produced in the year 438 B.C. and is the earliest of those which remain to us. It is based on the old Greek myth that set forth the true beauty of marriage, and caused our Chaucer to make Admetus and Alcestis, under Venus, king and queen of love. "Electra" was written probably almost twenty-five years later, and "Orestes" was produced in the year 408, thirty years after "Alcestis," and only two years before the poet's death. The "Trojan Dames" had been produced seven years earlier.

"Iphigenia in Aulis" was one of three plays brought out at the great Dionysia by the youngest son of Euripides after his father's death. The date of the "Iphigenia in Tauris" cannot be determined.

Fables about Euripides abound. He is said to have written his plays in a cavern. He is said to have had two wives who were both false to him, statements against

which there is a good deal of evidence, and for which there is none. The dogs who tore him to death are said to have been women; and their reason for picking him to pieces in that very decisive manner, was that he was going to an assignation (aged seventy-five). In the year 414, eight years before his death, he was bitterly attacked by Aristophanes in the "Thesmophoriazusæ," and the absence from the attack of any reference to the two bad wives is decisive against the fable. He was married to Chœrilla at least thirty years. Fables abound among the chatter of the world, and when the question is of a poet who was alive two thousand two hundred and fifty years ago, they are apt to be a little untrustworthy. They are not always exactly fitted to the facts when they concern one of us who are now living. On the whole, he is near truth who will think or speak no evil of any one except on evidence that would convince a jury.

H. M.

*September 1887.*

# I

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# EURIPIDES.

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## ALCESTIS.

ADMETUS and Alcestis were nearly related before their marriage. Æolus, the third in descent from Prometheus, was the father of Cretheus and Salmoneus; Æson the father of Jason, and Pheres the father of Admetus, were sons of Cretheus; Tyro, the daughter of Salmoneus, was by Neptune mother to Pelias, whose eldest daughter Alcestis was. The historian, who relates the arts by which Medea induced the daughters of Pelias to cut their father in pieces in expectation of seeing him restored to youth, tells us that Alcestis alone, through the tenderness of her filial piety, concurred not with her sisters in that fatal deed.—*Diodor. Sic.*

Pheres, now grown old, had resigned his kingdom to his son, and retired to his paternal estate, as was usual in those States where the sceptre was a spear. Admetus, on his first accession to the regal power, had kindly received Apollo, who was banished from heaven, and compelled for the space of a year to be a slave to a mortal; and the god, after he was restored to his celestial honours, did not forget that friendly house; but, when Admetus lay ill of a disease from which there was no recovery, prevailed upon the Fates to spare his life, on condition that some near relation would consent to die for him; but neither his father, nor his mother, nor any of his friends, was willing to pay this ransom. Alcestis, hearing this, generously devoted her own life to save her husband's.

Upon this wild and unpromising fable the poet has built this

pleasing drama. With a beautiful simplicity which characterizes the compositions of the ancients, and with a tenderness of which his own heart was peculiarly susceptible, he has given these scenes of domestic sensibility and distress their full effect. The interview indeed between Pheres and Admetus is harsh and indelicate; the Chorus acknowledges it to be so, and rebukes them both; but it is the natural result of the manners and ideas of the times, and therefore not offensive to an Athenian audience, though to us it must appear indecent: it shows what it was intended to show, the impassioned grief of Admetus, and in those times the passions spoke their own natural language without reserve; and, according to the ideas of those times, Pheres must be considered as guilty of the basest and most unnatural pusillanimity. Virgil, the most accurate observer of nature, gives even the unfeeling and savage Mezentius the softening of parental affection, and makes him exclaim, on the sight of his son, who died to save his father—

Tantane me tenuit vivendi, nate, voluptas,  
 Ut pro me hostili paterer succedere dextræ  
 Quem genui? tuane hæc genitor per vulnere servor,  
 Morte tuâ viven?

The design of this tragedy is to recommend the virtue of hospitality, so sacred among the Grecians, and encouraged on political views, as well as to keep alive a generous and social benevolence: the refinement of a double moral ill agrees with the simplicity of the ancients.

The scene is in the vestibule of the house of Admetus.

Palæphatus has given this explanation of the fable: After the death of Pelias, Acastus pursued the unhappy daughters to punish them for destroying their father. Alcestis fled to Pheræ; Acastus demanded her of Admetus, who refused to give her up; he therefore advanced towards Pheræ with a great army, laying the country waste with fire and sword. Admetus marched out of the city to check these devastations, fell into an ambush, and was taken prisoner. Acastus threatened to put him to death. When Alcestis understood that the life of Admetus was in this danger on her account, she went voluntarily and surrendered herself to Acastus, who

discharged Admetus, and detained her in custody. At this critical time Hercules, on his expedition to Thrace, arrives at Pheræ, is hospitably entertained by Admetus, and, being informed of the distress and danger of Alcestis, immediately attacks Acastus, defeats his army, recovers the lady, and restores her to Admetus.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

APOLLO.	HERCULES.
ORCUS.	PERES.
ALCESTIS	ATTENDANTS.
ADMETUS.	CHORUS OF PHEREANS.
EUMELUS.	

---

APOLLO.

THY royal house, Admetus, yet again  
 I visit, where a slave among thy slaves  
 Thy table, though a god, I deigned to praise ;  
 To this compelled by Jove, who slew my son,  
 The healing sage, launching against his breast  
 The flaming thunder ; hence enraged I killed  
 The Cyclops, that prepared his fiery bolts.  
 For this a penal task my vengeful sire  
 Assigned me, to a mortal doomed a slave  
 Perforce ; I hither came, and fed his herds,  
 Who friendly entertained me, guarding then,  
 And to this day, his hospitable house.  
 Holy the house, and holy is its lord,  
 The son of Pheres ; him from death I saved  
 The Fates beguiling ; for those ancient powers  
 Assented that Admetus should escape  
 Death then approaching, would some other go,  
 Exchanged for him, to the dark realms beneath.  
 His friends, his father, e'en the aged dame  
 That gave him birth, were asked in vain ; not one

Was found, his wife except ; for him she willed  
To die, and view no more th' ethereal light.  
She in the house, supported in their arms,  
Now sighs out her last breath : for she must die.  
And this the fate-appointed day : for this,  
Dear as it is, I leave the friendly mansion,  
Lest there pollution find me. But I see  
Orcus advancing near, priest of the dead ;  
He to the house of Pluto will conduct her :  
Observant of the stated time he comes,  
True to the day when she perforce must die.

## ORCUS, APOLLO.

ORC. Why art thou here? Why dost thou make this house  
Thy haunt, Apollo? Thou dost wrong, again,  
Th' infernal realms defrauding of their honours,  
Torn from them, or delayed. Sufficed it not  
T' have snatched Admetus from his doom, the Fates  
With fraudulent arts deluding? Now again,  
Armed with thy bow, why dost thou guard his wife,  
Daughter of Pelias, bound by solemn vow,  
Saving her husband's life, to die for him?

APOL. Fear not; thy right I reverence and just claim.

ORC. What means thy bow, if thou revere the right?

APOL. It ever is my wont to bear these arms.

ORC. Ay, and unjustly to defend this house.

APOL. I mourn th' afflictions of the man I love.

ORC. Wouldst thou defraud me of this second dead?

APOL. The first by violence I took not from thee.

ORC. How on the earth then walks he now alive?

APOL. Ransomed by her, for whom thou now art come.

ORC. And I will lead her to the realms below.

APOL. Take her : I know not if I might persuade thee.

ORC. Him, whom I ought, to seize ; for that prepared.

APOL. No : but t' involve in death ripe, lingering age.

ORC. Full well I understand thy speech and zeal.

APOL. May then Alcestis to that age be spared?

ORC. No : honour, be assured, delights e'en me.

APOL. Thou canst but take a single life, no more,

ORC. Greater my glory when the youthful die.

APOL. More sumptuous obsequies await her age.

ORC. This were a law in favour of the rich.

APOL. What secret meaning hath thy wisdom here?

ORC. They with their wealth would purchase to die old.

APOL. Wilt thou not then indulge me with this grace?

ORC. Not I indeed : go to : thou knowest my manners.

APOL. Hostile to mortals, hateful to the gods.

ORC. Thou canst not have all that thou shouldst not have.

APOL. Yet, ruthless as thou art, soon wilt thou cease

This contest ; such a man to Pheres' house

Comes, to the frozen continent of Thrace

Sent by Eurystheus for the savage steeds

Yoked to the tyrant's car. He, in this house

A welcome guest t' Admetus, will by force

Take his wife from thee ; and no thanks from me

Will be thy due ; yet what I now entreat

Then thou wilt yield, and I shall hate thee still.

ORC. Say what thou wilt, nothing the more for that

Shalt thou from me obtain : this woman goes,

Be sure of that, to Pluto's dark domain.

I go, and with this sword assert my claim,

For sacred to th' infernal gods that head,

Whose hair is hallowed, by this charmed blade.

#### CHORUS.

1st SEMICHOR. Before this royal mansion all is still :  
What may this melancholy silence mean?

2nd SEMICHOR. And not a friend is nigh, from whom to  
learn

Whether we ought to wail the queen now dead,

Or lives she yet, yet sees the light of heaven,

For conjugal affection justly deemed

By me, by all, the noblest of her sex.

1st SEMICHOR. Hear you a cry, hear you a clash of hands  
Within, or lamentations for the dead?

2nd SEMICHOR. Not e'en a servant holds his station here



Before the gates. O, 'midst this awful gloom  
Appear, bright Pæan, and dispel the storm !

1st SEMICHOR. If she were dead, they would not be thus  
silent ;

Nor could the body vanish from the house.

2nd SEMICHOR. Whence is thy confidence ? My fears o'er-  
come me.

1st SEMICHOR. A wife so honoured would Admetus bear  
Without due pomp in silence to her tomb ?

2nd SEMICHOR. Nor vase of fountain water do I see  
Before the doors, as custom claims, to bathe  
The corse ; and none hath on the portal placed  
His locks, in solemn mourning for the dead  
Usually shorn ; nor does the younger train  
Of females raise their sorrowing voices high.

1st SEMICHOR. Yet this the fatal day, when she must leave  
The light of heaven.

2nd SEMICHOR. Why dost thou mention this ?  
O, thou hast touched my heart, hast touched my soul.

1st SEMICHOR. When on the good afflictions fall, to grieve  
Becomes the man that hath been prized as honest.

*Strophe.*

In vain, our pious vows are vain :  
Make we the flying sail our care,  
The light bark bounding o'er the main,  
To what new realm shall we repair ?  
To Lycia's hallowed strand ?  
Or where in solitary state,  
'Midst thirsty deserts wild and wide  
That close him round on ev'ry side,  
Prophetic Ammon holds his awful seat ?  
What charm, what potent hand  
Shall save her from the realms beneath ?  
He comes, the ruthless tyrant Death :  
I have no priest, no altar more,  
Whose aid I may implore.

*Antistrophe.*

O that the son of Phœbus now  
 Lived to behold th' ethereal light !  
 Then might she leave the seats below,  
 Where Pluto reigns in cheerless night :  
 The Sage's potent art,  
 'Till thund'ring Jove's avenging power  
 Hurl'd his red thunders at his breast,  
 Could from the yawning gulf releast  
 To the sweet light of life the dead restore.  
 Who now shall aid impart ?  
 To ev'ry god at ev'ry shrine  
 The king hath paid the rites divine :  
 But vain his vows, his pious care ;  
 And ours is dark despair.

## CHORUS, FEMALE ATTENDANT.

CHOR. But of the female train one from the house  
 Comes bathed in tears : what tidings shall I hear ?  
 To weep; if aught of ill befalls thy lords,  
 Becomes thee : I would know if yet she lives,  
 Or sinks beneath the ruthless power of death.

ATT. As living I may speak of her, and dead.

CHOR. Living and dead at once, how may that be ?

ATT. E'en now she sinks in death, and breathes her last.

CHOR. Unhappy king, of what a wife bereft !

ATT. Nor knows our lord his suffering, ere it comes.

CHOR. Is there no hope then yet to save her life ?

ATT. Th' inevitable day of fate is come.

CHOR. Have you prepared what the sad case requires ?

ATT. Each honour that may grace her obsequies.

CHOR. Illustrious in her death, the best of wives :  
 The sun in his wide course sees not her equal.

ATT. The best of wives indeed ; who will gainsay it ?  
 What could the brightest pattern of her sex  
 Do more ? What greater proof give of the honour

She bears her husband, than a ready will  
To die for him ! This all the city knows.  
How in the house she hath demeaned herself  
Will claim thy admiration. When she knew  
The destined day was come, in fountain water  
She bathed her lily-tinctured limbs, then took  
From her rich chests of odorous cedar formed  
A splendid robe, and her most radiant dress ;  
Thus gorgeously arrayed she stood before  
The hallowed flames, and thus addressed her prayer :  
“ O queen, I go to the infernal shades,  
Yet, ere I go, with reverence let me breathe  
My last request—Protect my orphan children,  
Make my son happy with the wife he loves,  
And wed my daughter to a noble husband :  
Nor let them, like their mother, to the tomb  
Untimely sink, but in their native land  
Be blest through lengthened life to honoured age.”  
Then to each altar in the royal house  
She went, and crowned it, and addressed her vows,  
Plucking the myrtle bough : nor tear, nor sigh  
Came from her, neither did th’ approaching ill  
Change the fresh beauties of her vermeil cheek.  
Her chamber then she visits, and her bed ;  
There her tears flowed, and thus she spoke : “ O bed,  
To which my wedded lord, for whom I die,  
Led me a virgin bride, farewell ! To thee  
No blame do I impute, for me alone  
Hast thou destroyed. Disdaining to betray  
Thee, and my lord, I die. To thee shall come  
Some other woman, not more chaste, perchance  
More happy.” As she lay, she kissed the couch,  
And bathed it with a flood of tears : that passed,  
She left her chamber, then returned, and oft  
She left it, oft returned, and on the couch  
Fondly, each time she entered, cast herself.  
Her children, as they hung upon her robes  
Weeping, she raised, and clasped them to her breast  
Each after each, as now about to die.

Each servant through the house burst into tears  
 In pity of their mistress ; she to each  
 Stretched her right hand ; nor was there one so mean  
 To whom she spoke not, and admitted him  
 To speak to her again. Within the house  
 These are our griefs. Admetus must have died,  
 Have perished ; but escaping is immersed  
 In sorrows, which his heart shall ne'er forget.

CHOR. Well may the groan burst from him, thus to lose  
 A wife with every excellence adorned.

ATT. He weeps indeed, and in his arms supports  
 His much-loved wife, entreats her not to leave him,  
 Asking impossibilities. She wastes  
 And fades with her disease ; her languid limbs  
 Supporting on his hand, yet while some breath  
 Of life remains she wishes to behold  
 The radiance of the sun, 'tis her last view,  
 As never more to see his golden orb.  
 I go to tell them thou art here : not all  
 Bear to their lords that firm unshaken faith  
 T' attend them in their ills ; but thou of old  
 Hast to this house approved thyself a friend.

CHOR. Supreme of gods, is there no remedy  
 To these afflictions, from the storms of fate  
 No refuge to our lords ? Some means of safety  
 Hast thou assigned ? Or must these locks be shorn,  
 And sorrow robe me in her sable weeds ?

ATT. Too plain, my friends, too plain : yet to the gods  
 Breathe we our vows, for great their power to save.  
 O royal Pæan, for Admetus' ills  
 Find some relief ; assist him, O assist him !  
 As thou before didst save him, save him now  
 From death ; repress the tyrant's murd'rous haste !

CHOR. Alas, alas ! Woe, woe is me ! Thou son  
 Of Pheres, wilt thou bear to live, deprived  
 Of such a wife ? Will not despair unsheath  
 The self-destroying sword ? Will it not find  
 Some means of violent death ? This day thy wife—  
 Dear should I say ? nay, dearest to thy soul—

Shalt thou see dead. But she comes forth, and with her  
 Her husband. Groan, thou land of Pheres, raise  
 The cry of mourning ; for the best of women  
 Wastes with disease, and drooping to the earth  
 Sinks to th' infernal Pluto's dreary realms.  
 Never will I pronounce the nuptial state  
 To pleasure more allied than grief : of old  
 This often have I noted, chiefly now  
 Viewing my king's affliction, who, bereft  
 Of this sweet excellence, is doomed to pass  
 A solitary life estranged from joy.

ALCESTIS, ADMETUS, EUMELUS, CHORUS.

ALC. Thou sun, and thou fair light of day, ye clouds  
 That in quick eddies whirl along the sky !

ADM. Sees thee and me most wretched, yet in nought  
 Offending 'gainst the gods that thou shouldst die.

ALC. O earth, ye tow'ring roofs, thou bridal bed  
 Raised in Iolcos, my paternal seat !

ADM. O thou poor sufferer, raise thee, leave me not ;  
 Entreat the powerful gods to pity thee.

ALC. I see the two-oared boat, the Stygian barge ;  
 And he, that wafts the dead, grasps in his hand  
 His pole, and calls me, " Why dost thou delay ?  
 Haste thee ; thou lingerest ; all is ready here.  
 Charon impatient speeds me to begone."

ADM. A melancholy voyage this to me.  
 O thou unhappy, what a fate is ours !

ALC. He drags me, some one drags me to the gates  
 That close upon the dead ; dost thou not see him,  
 How stern he frowns beneath his gloomy brows,  
 Th' impetuous Pluto ? What wouldst thou with me ?  
 Off, let me go ! Ah, what a dreary path,  
 Wretched, most wretched, must I downwards tread !

ADM. To thy friends mournful, most to me, and these  
 Thy children, who with me this sorrow share.

ALC. No longer hold me up, hold me no longer ;  
 Here lay me down : I have not strength to stand :



Death is hard by, dark night creeps o'er my eyes.  
My children, O my children, now no more,  
Your mother is no more : farewell ! May you  
More happy see the golden light of heaven !

ADM. Ah, what a mournful word is this ! To me  
Than any death more painful. By the gods,  
Forsake me not. Shouldst thou be taken from me,  
I were no more ; in thee I live ; thy love,  
Thy sweet society my soul reveres.

ALC. Thou seest, Admetus, what to me the Fates  
Assign ; yet, ere I die, I wish to tell thee  
What lies most near my heart. I honoured thee,  
And in exchange for thine my forfeit life  
Devoted ; now I die for thee, though free  
Not to have died, but from Thessalia's chiefs  
Preferring whom I pleased in royal state  
To have lived happy here : I had no will  
To live bereft of thee with these poor orphans ;  
I die without reluctance, though the gifts  
Of youth are mine to make life grateful to me.  
Yet he that gave thee birth, and she that bore thee,  
Deserted thee, though well it had beseemed them  
With honour to have died for thee, t' have saved  
Their son with honour, glorious in their death.  
They had no child but thee, they had no hope  
Of other offspring shouldst thou die ; and I  
Might thus have lived, thou mightst have lived, till age  
Crept slowly on, nor wouldst thou heave the sigh  
Thus of thy wife deprived, nor train alone  
Thy orphan children. But some god appointed  
It should be thus : thus be it. Thou to me  
Requite this kindness ; never shall I ask  
An equal retribution, nothing bears  
A value high as life : yet my request  
Is just, thou wilt confess it ; for thy love  
To these our children equals mine, thy soul  
If wisdom tempers. In their mother's house  
Let them be lords : wed not again, to set  
A stepdame o'er my children, some base woman

That wants my virtues ; she through jealousy  
Will work against their lives, because to thee  
I bore them : do not this, I beg thee do not ;  
For to the offspring of a former bed  
A stepdame comes sharp as a serpent's tooth.  
My son, that holds endearing converse with thee,  
Hath in his father a secure protection.  
But who, my daughter, shall with honour guide  
Thy virgin years ? What woman shalt thou find,  
New-wedded to thy father, whose vile arts  
Will not with slanderous falsehoods taint thy name,  
And blast thy nuptials in youth's freshest bloom  
For never shall thy mother see thee led  
A bride, nor at thy throes speak comfort to thee,  
Then present when a mother's tenderness  
Is most alive : for I must die ; the ill  
Waits not a day, but quickly shall I be  
Numbered amongst the dead. Farewell, be happy  
And thou, my husband, mayst with honour boast  
Thou hast been wedded to a virtuous wife ;  
And you, my children, glory in your mother.

CHOR. Fear not : I boldly pledge my faith that this  
He will perform, if reason holds her seat.

ADM. This shall be done, let not such fears disturb thee,  
It shall be done ; for living thou wast mine,  
And dead thou only shalt be called my wife.  
Never in thy dear place Thessalian bride  
Shall call me husband : no, nor other woman,  
Though from a line of ancient kings she draws  
Her noble blood, and boasts each peerless grace  
Of native beauty. I am blest with children,  
Nor wish I more ; in these I pray the gods  
I may have joy, since all my joy in thee  
Is lost. This mourning not one single year,  
But to my life's last period, shall be borne.  
How hateful are my parents ! for their words  
Alone were friendly, not their deeds ; whilst thou,  
Paying the dearest forfeit for my life,  
Hast saved me. Shall I ever cease to mourn,

Deprived of such a wife? Hence I renounce  
 The feast, the cheerful guest, the flow'ry wreath,  
 And song that used to echo through my house :  
 For never will I touch the lyre again,  
 Nor to the Libyan flute's sweet measures raise  
 My voice ; with thee all my delights are dead.  
 Thy beauteous figure, by the artist's hand  
 Skilfully wrought, shall in my bed be laid ;  
 By that reclining, I will clasp it to me,  
 And call it by thy name, and think I hold  
 My dear wife in my arms, and have her yet,  
 Though now no more I have her : cold delight  
 I ween ; yet thus th' affliction of my soul  
 Shall I relieve, and visiting my dreams  
 Shalt thou delight me ; for to see a friend  
 Is grateful to the soul, come when he will,  
 Though an unreal vision of the night.  
 Had I the voice of Orpheus, and his skill  
 Of power to soothe with my melodious strains  
 The daughter of bright Ceres, or her husband,  
 That from their realms I might receive thee back,  
 I would go down ; nor should th' infernal dog,  
 Nor the stern Charon, sitting at his oar  
 To waft the dead, restrain me, till thy life  
 I had restored to the fair light of day.  
 But there await me till I die ; prepare  
 A mansion for me, as again with me  
 To dwell ; for in thy tomb will I be laid  
 In the same cedar, by thy side composed ;  
 For ev'n in death I will not be disjoined  
 From thee, who hast alone been faithful to me.

CHOR. For her dear sake thy sorrows will I share  
 As friend with friend ; and she is worthy of it.

ALC. You hear, my children, what your father's words  
 Have promised, not to wed another woman  
 To your discomfort, nor dishonour me.

ADM. I now repeat it ; firm shall be my faith.

ALC. On this, receive thy children from my hands.

ADM. A much-loved gift, and from a much-loved hand.

ALC. Be now, instead of me, a mother to them.

ADM. If they lose thee, it must indeed be so.

ALC. When I should live, I sink among the dead.

ADM. Ah me, what shall I do bereft of thee!

ALC. Time will abate thy grief, the dead is nothing.

ADM. O lead me, by the gods, lead me down with thee.

ALC. Enough, it is enough that I die for thee.

ADM. O fate, of what a wife dost thou deprive me!

ALC. A heavy weight hangs on my darkened eye.

ADM. If thou forsake me, I am lost indeed.

ALC. As one that is no more I now am nothing.

ADM. Ah, raise thy face : do not forsake thy children.

ALC. It must be so perforce : farewell, my children!

ADM. Look on them, but a look!

ALC. I am no more.

ADM. How dost thou? Wilt thou leave us then?

ALC. Farewell!

ADM. And what a wretch, what a lost wretch am I!

CHOR. She's gone; thy wife, Admetus, is no more.

EUM. O my unhappy fate!

My mother sinks to the dark realms of night,

Nor longer views this golden light;

But to the ills of life exposed

Leaves my poor orphan state.

Her eyes, my father, see, her eyes are closed,

And her hand nerveless falls.

Yet hear me, O my mother, hear my cries,

It is thy son that calls,

Who prostrate on the earth breathes on thy lips his sighs.

ADM. On one that hears not, sees not : I and you

Must bend beneath affliction's heaviest load.

EUM. Ah, she hath left my youth :

My mother, my dear mother, is no more,

Left me my sufferings to deplore;

Who shall my sorrows soothe?

Thou too, my sister, thy full share shalt know

Of grief, thy heart to rend.

Vain, O my father, vain thy nuptial vows,

Brought to this speedy end;  
 For, when my mother died, in ruin sunk thy house.  
 CHOR. Admetus, thou perforce must bear these ills :  
 Thou'rt not the first, nor shalt thou be the last  
 Of mortal men, to lose a virtuous wife :  
 For know, death is a debt we all must pay.

ADM. I know it well ; not unawares this ill  
 Falls on me ; I foresaw, and mourned it long.  
 But I will bear the body hence ; attend :  
 And, whilst you wait, raise with alternate voice.  
 The pæan to the ruthless god that rules  
 Below : and through my realms of Thessaly  
 I give command that all in solemn grief  
 For this dear woman shear their locks, and wear  
 The sable garb of mourning ; from your steeds,  
 Whether in pairs they whirl the car, or bear  
 Single the rider's rein, their waving manes  
 Cut close ; nor through the city be the sound  
 Of flute or lyre for twelve revolving moons.  
 Never shall I entomb one dearer to me,  
 Or one more kind : these honours from my hands  
 She merits, for she only died for me.

*Strophe 1.*

Immortal bliss be thine,  
 Daughter of Pelias, in the realms below,  
 Immortal pleasures round thee flow,  
 Though never there the sun's bright beams shall shine.  
 Be the black-browed Pluto told,  
 And the Stygian boatman old,  
 Whose rude hands grasp the oar, the rudder guide,  
 The dead conveying o'er the tide,  
 Let him be told, so rich a freight before  
 His light skiff never bore ;  
 Tell him that o'er the joyless lakes  
 The noblest of her sex her dreary passage takes.

*Strophe 2.*

Thy praise the bards shall tell,  
 When to their hymning voice the echo rings,  
     Or when they sweep the solemn strings,  
 And wake to rapture the seven-chorded shell,  
     Or in Sparta's jocund bowers,  
     Circling when the vernal hours  
 Bring the Carnean feast, whilst through the night  
     Full-orbed the high moon rolls her light ;  
 Or where rich Athens proudly elevate  
     Shows her magnificent state :  
     Their voice thy glorious death shall raise,  
 And swell th' enraptured strain to celebrate thy praise.

*Antistrophe 1.*

O that I had the power,  
 Could I but bring thee from the shades of night  
     Again to view this golden light,  
 To leave that boat, to leave that dreary shore,  
     Where Cocytus deep and wide  
     Rolls along his sullen tide !  
 For thou, O best of women, thou alone  
     For thy lord's life daredst give thy own.  
 Light lie the earth upon that gentle breast,  
     And be thou ever blest !  
     But should he choose to wed again,  
 Mine and thy children's hearts would hold him in disdain.

*Antistrophe 2.*

When, to avert his doom,  
 His mother in the earth refused to lie ;  
     Nor would his ancient father die  
 To save his son from an untimely tomb ;  
     Though the hand of time had spread  
     Hoar hairs o'er each aged head ;  
 In youth's fresh bloom, in beauty's radiant glow,  
     The darksome way thou daredst to go,

And for thy youthful lord's to give thy life.  
 Be mine so true a wife ;  
 Though rare the lot : then should I prove  
 Th' indissoluble bond of faithfulness and love.

HERCULES, CHORUS.

HERC. Ye strangers, citizens of Pheræ, say  
 If I shall find Admetus in the house.

CHOR. There is the son of Pheres, Hercules.  
 But what occasion, tell us, brought thee hither  
 To Thessaly ; to Pheræ why this visit ?

HERC. A toil imposed by the Tirynthian king.

CHOR. And whither roving ? on what journey bound ?

HERC. For the four steeds that whirl the Thracian's car.

CHOR. How to be won ; art thou a stranger there ?

HERC. A stranger, never on Bistonian ground.

CHOR. These horses are not won without strong contest.

HERC. The toil, whate'er it be, I could not shun.

CHOR. He must be slain, or death awaits thee there.

HERC. Not the first contest this I have essayed.

CHOR. Shouldst thou o'ercome their lord, what is the prize ?

HERC. His coursers to Eurystheus I shall lead.

CHOR. No slight task in their mouths to place the curb.

HERC. I shall, though from their nostrils they breathe fire.

CHOR. With their fierce jaws they rend the flesh of men.

HERC. So feeds the mountain savage, not the horse.

CHOR. Their mangers shalt thou see all stained with blood.

HERC. From whom does he that bred them draw his race ?

CHOR. From Mars this king of golden-shielded Thrace.

HERC. How is this toil assigned me by my fate,  
 In enterprise so hazardous and high

Engaged, that always with the sons of Mars

I must join battle ? With Lycaon first,

With Cygnus next ; now with these furious steeds

And their proud lord another contest waits me :

But never shall Alcmena's son be seen

To tremble at the fierceness of a foe.

CHOR. But, see, the sceptred ruler of this land,  
 Admetus, from his house advances to thee.

## ADMETUS, HERCULES, CHORUS.

ADM. Hail, son of Jove, of Perseus' noble blood.

HERC. Hail thou, Admetus, king of Thessaly.

ADM. I am no stranger to thy friendly wishes.

HERC. Why are thy locks in sign of mourning shorn?

ADM. 'Tis for one dead, whom I must this day bury.

HERC. The god avert thy mourning for a child!

ADM. My children, what I had, live in my house.

HERC. Thy aged father, haply he is gone.

ADM. My father lives, and she that bore me lives.

HERC. Lies then thy wife Alcestis 'mongst the dead?

ADM. Of her I have in double wise to speak.

HERC. As of the living speakst thou, or the dead?

ADM. She is, and is no more: this grief afflicts me.

HERC. This gives no information, dark thy words.

ADM. Knowst thou not then the destiny assigned her?

HERC. I know that she submits to die for thee.

ADM. To this assenting is she not no more?

HERC. Lament her not too soon; await the time.

ADM. She's dead; one soon to die is now no more.

HERC. It differs wide to be, or not to be.

ADM. Such are thy sentiments, far other mine.

HERC. But wherefore are thy tears? What friend is dead?

ADM. A woman; of a woman made I mention.

HERC. Of foreign birth, or one allied to thee.

ADM. Of foreign birth, but to my house most dear.

HERC. How in thy house then did she chance to die?

ADM. Her father dead, she came an orphan hither.

HERC. Would I had found thee with no grief oppressed.

ADM. With what intent dost thou express thee thus?

HERC. To seek some other hospitable hearth.

ADM. Not so, O king; come not so great an ill.

HERC. To those that mourn a guest is troublesome.

ADM. Dead are the dead: but enter thou my house.

HERC. Shame that with those who weep a guest should feast.

ADM. We have apartments separate, to receive thee.

HERC. Permit me to depart, much will I thank thee.

ADM. It must not be; no, to another house



Thou must not turn aside. Go thou before;  
 Ope those apartments of the house which bear  
 A different aspect ; give command to those  
 Whose charge it is to spread the plenteous table,  
 And bar the doors between : the voice of woe  
 Unseemly heard afflicts the feasting guest.

CHOR. What wouldst thou do, Admetus ? Such a grief  
 Now lying heavy on thee, canst thou bear  
 T' admit a guest ? Doth this bespeak thee wise ?

ADM. If from my house or city I should drive  
 A coming guest, wouldst thou commend me more ?  
 Thou wouldst not : my affliction would not thus  
 Be less, but more unhospitable I ;  
 And to my former ills this further ill  
 Be added, I should hear my mansion called  
 The stranger-hating house. Besides, to me  
 His hospitable doors are always open,  
 Whene'er I tread the thirsty soil of Argos.

CHOR. Why didst thou then conceal thy present grief,  
 A stranger friend arriving, as thou sayst ?

ADM. My gate he would not enter, had he known  
 Of my affliction aught : yet acting thus  
 Some may perchance deem me unwise, nor hold me  
 Worthy of praise ; yet never shall my house  
 Know to dishonour or reject a guest.

CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

Yes, liberal house, with princely state  
 To many a stranger, many a guest  
 Oft hast thou oped thy friendly gate,  
 Oft spread the hospitable feast.  
 Beneath thy roof Apollo deigned to dwell,  
 Here strung his silver-sounding shell,  
 And mixing with thy menial train  
 Deigned to be called the shepherd of the plain :

And as he drove his flocks along,  
 Whether the winding vale they rove,  
 Or linger in the upland grove,  
 He tuned the pastoral pipe or rural song.

*Strophe 2.*

Delighted with thy tuneful lay  
 No more the savage thirsts for blood ;  
 Amidst thy flocks in harmless play  
 Wantons the lynx's spotted brood ;  
 Pleased from his lair on Othrys' rugged brow  
 The lion seeks the vale below ;  
 Whilst to thy lyre's melodious sound  
 The dappled hinds in sportive measures bound ;  
 And as the vocal echo rings,  
 Lightly their nimble feet they ply,  
 Leaving their pine-clad forests high,  
 Charmed with the sweet notes of thy gladdening strings.

*Antistrophe 1.*

Hence is thy house, Admetus, graced  
 With all that Plenty's hand bestows,  
 Near the sweet-streaming current placed  
 That from the lake of Bœbia flows.  
 Far to the west extends the wide domain,  
 Rich-pastured mead and cultured plain ;  
 Its bound, the dark Molossian air,  
 Where the Sun stations his unharnessed car,  
 And stretching to his eastern ray,  
 Where Pelion rising in his pride  
 Frowns o'er th' Ægean's portless tide,  
 Reaches from sea to sea thy ample sway.

*Antistrophe 2.*

Yet wilt thou ope thy gate e'en now,  
 E'en now wilt thou receive this guest :  
 Though from thine eye the warm tear flow,  
 Though sorrow rend thy suffering breast :

Sad tribute to thy wife, who knew in death  
Lamented lies thy roof beneath.  
But Nature thus her laws decreed,  
The generous mind is prompt to generous deed ;  
For all the power of wisdom lies  
Fixed in the righteous bosom : hence  
My soul assumes this confidence,  
Fair to the virtuous shall Success arise.

## ADMETUS, CHORUS.

ADM. Ye citizens of Pheræ, present here,  
Benevolent to me, my dead adorned  
With every honour, the attendant train  
Are bearing to the tomb and funeral pyre.  
Do you, for ancient usage so requires,  
Address her as she takes her last sad way.

CHOR. Thy father Pheres ! See, his aged foot  
Advances ; his attendants in their hands  
Bear gorgeous presents, honours to the dead.

## PHERES, ADMETUS, CHORUS.

PHER. I come, my son, joint sufferer in thy griefs ;  
For thou hast lost a good and virtuous wife,  
None will gainsay it ; but thou must perforce  
Endure this, though severe. These ornaments  
Receive, and let her go beneath the earth :  
These honours are her due, since for thy life  
She died, my son ; nor would she I should be  
Childless, nor suffered me bereft of thee  
To waste in grief my sad remains of life.  
The life of all her sex hath she adorned  
With added lustre by this generous deed.  
O thou, that hast preserved my son, and raised  
Our sinking glories, hail ! E'en in the house  
Of Pluto be thou blest ! Such marriages  
Pronounce I good ; others of little worth.

ADM. Thou comest not to these obsequies by me

Invited, nor thy presence do I deem  
Friendly. She never in thy ornaments  
Shall be arrayed, nor wants she aught of thine  
To grace her funeral rites. Then was the time  
To show thy social sorrow, when my life  
The Fates demanded : thou couldst stand aloof,  
Old as thou art, and give a younger up  
To die ; and wouldst thou now bewail her death ?  
Art thou my father ? No ; nor she, who says  
She brought me forth, my mother, though so called ;  
But the base offspring of some slave thy wife  
Stole me, and put me to her breast. Thy deeds  
Show what thou art by plain and evident proof :  
And never can I deem myself thy son,  
Who passest all in mean and abject spirit.  
At such an age, just trembling on the verge  
Of life, that wouldst not—nay, thou daredst not—die  
For thine own son : but you could suffer her,  
Though sprung from foreign blood. With justice then  
Her only as my father must I deem,  
Her only as my mother ; yet this course  
Mightst thou have run with glory, for thy son  
Daring to die ; brief was the space of life  
That could remain to thee. I then had lived  
My destined time ; she too had lived, nor thus  
Of her forsaken should I wail my loss.  
Yet all that makes man happy hadst thou proved,  
Blest through thy life : in royalty thy youth  
Grew up ; I was thy son t' inherit from thee  
Thy treasures, that not childless hadst thou died,  
Leaving thy desolated house a prey  
To plundering strangers. Neither canst thou say  
Thou gavest me up to death as one that held  
Thy age in rude contempt : I honoured thee  
With holy reverence, requited thus  
By thee and her that bore me. Other sons  
Wilt thou not therefore speed thee to beget,  
To cherish thy old age, to grace thee dead  
With sumptuous vest, and lay thee in the tomb ?

That office never shall my hand perform,  
For, far as in thee lay, I died ; if yet  
I view this light, fortune presenting me  
Other deliverer, his son I am,  
With pious fondness to support his age.  
Unmeaning is the old man's wish to die,  
Of age complaining and life's lengthened course ;  
For, at th' advance of death, none has the will  
To die : old age is no more grievous to them.

CHOR. Forbear ; enough the present weight of woe.  
My son, exasperate not a father's mind.

PHER. Me as some worthless Lydian dost thou rate,  
My son, or Phrygian slave bought with thy gold ?  
Dost thou not know I am Thessalian born,  
Of a Thessalian father, truly free ?  
Opprobrious are thy words, reviling me  
With youthful insolence, not quitted so.  
I gave thee birth, thence lord of my fair house ;  
I gave thee nurture, that indeed I owed thee,  
But not to die for thee : such law from nature  
Received I not, that fathers for their sons  
Should die, nor does Greece know it. For thyself,  
Whether misfortune press thee, or thy state  
Be happier, thou wast born : thou hast from me  
Whate'er behoves thee : o'er an ample realm  
Thou now art king, and I shall leave thee more,  
A large extent of lands ; for from my father  
These I received. In what then have I wronged thee ?  
Or what deprived thee ? Die not thou for me,  
Nor I for thee. Is it to thee a joy  
To view the light of heaven ? and dost thou think  
Thy father joys not in it ? Long I deem  
The time below ? But little is the space  
Of life, yet pleasant. Thou, devoid of shame,  
Hast struggled not to die, and thou dost live  
Passing the bounds of life assigned by fate,  
By killing her. My mean and abject spirit  
Thou dost rebuke, O thou most timid wretch,  
Vanquished e'en by a woman, who for thee,

Her young and beauteous husband, freely died.  
A fine device that thou mightst never die,  
Couldst thou persuade who at the time might be  
Thy wife to die for thee ; yet canst thou load  
Thy friends with vile reproach, if they decline  
To do it, base and timid as thou art.  
But hold thy peace ; and think, if life be dear  
To thee, it must be dear to all. On us,  
If thou wilt throw reproaches, thou shalt hear  
Enough of thy ill deeds, and nothing false.

CHOR. Too much of ill already hath been spoken :  
Forbear, old man, nor thus revile thy son.

ADM. Say what thou wilt, I have declared my thoughts:  
But if it gives thee pain to hear the truth,  
Much it behoved thee not to wrong me thus.

PHER. Had I died for thee, greater were the wrong.

ADM. Is death alike then to the young and old ?

PHER. With one life ought we live, and not with two.

ADM. Mayst thou then live a greater age than Jove !

PHER. And dost thou, nothing injured, curse thy parents ?

ADM. I saw thee fondly coveting long life.

PHER. Her, that died for thee, wilt thou not entomb ?

ADM. These are the tokens of thy abject spirit.

PHER. By us she died not, that thou wilt not say.

ADM. Ah, mayst thou some time come to want my aid !

PHER. Wed many wives, that more may die for thee.

ADM. On thee be that reproach, thou wouldst not die.

PHER. Sweet is this light of heaven, sweet is this light.

ADM. Base is thy thought, unworthy of a man.

PHER. Would it not joy thee to entomb my age ?

ADM. Die when thou wilt, inglorious wilt thou die.

PHER. An ill report will not affect me dead.

ADM. Alas, alas, how shameless is old age !

PHER. She was not shameless, but thou foundst her mad.

ADM. Begone, and suffer me t' entomb the dead.

PHER. I go : thou shalt entomb her, as thyself  
Her murderer. Look for vengeance from her friends.  
Acastus is no man, if his hands fail  
Dearly t' avenge on thee his sister's blood.

ADM. Why get thee gone, thou and thy worthy wife,  
 Grow old together, as you well deserve,  
 Childless, your son yet living; never more  
 Meet me beneath this roof. Go! Were it decent  
 To interrupt thee by the herald's voice,  
 I would forbid thee ever set thy foot  
 Within this mansion of thy ancestors.  
 But let us go, since we must bear our ill,  
 And place her body on the funeral pyre.

CHOR. O thou unhappy, nobly daring woman,  
 Most generous, brightest excellence, farewell!  
 Courteous my Hermes and th' infernal king  
 Reserve thee; in those realms if ought of grace  
 Awaits the virtuous, be those honours thine,  
 And be thy seat nigh Pluto's royal trade.

ATT. To many a guest ere now, from various realms  
 Arriving, in this mansion have I spread  
 The hospitable feast; but at this hearth  
 A viler than this stranger never shared  
 The bounty of Admetus: though he saw  
 My lord oppressed with grief, it checked him not,  
 He boldly entered; nor with sober cheer  
 Took the refreshment offered, though he knew  
 Th' affliction of the house. If what he would  
 We brought not on the instant, he enforced  
 His harsh commands; and, grasping in his hands  
 A goblet wreathed with ivy, filled it high  
 With the grape's purple juice, and quaffed it off  
 Untemper'd, till the glowing wine inflamed him;  
 Then, binding round his head a madd'ning wreath,  
 Howls dismal discord; two unpleasant strains  
 We heard, his harsh notes, who in night revered  
 Th' afflictions of Admetus, and the woe  
 Of sorrow through the family that wept  
 Our mistress; yet our fearful eyes we showed not,  
 Admetus so commanded, to the guest  
 My office bids me wait, and in the house  
 Receive this stranger, some designing knave,  
 Or ruffian robber: she meantime is borne

Out of the house, nor did I follow her,  
Nor stretched my hand lamenting my lost mistress :  
She was a mother to me, and to all  
My fellow-servants ; from a thousand ills  
She saved us, with her gentleness appeasing  
Our lord when angry : justly do I hate  
This stranger then, who came amidst our grief.

## HERCULES, ATTENDANT.

HERC. You fellow, why that grave and thoughtful look ?  
Ill it becomes a servant's countenance  
To frown on strangers, whom he should receive  
With cheerfulness. A good friend of thy lord  
Is present : all the welcome he can get  
From thee, a sullen and contracted brow,  
Mourning a loss that touches not this house.  
Come hither, that thou mayst be wiser, friend ;  
Knowst thou the nature of all mortal things ?  
Not thou, I ween ; how shouldst thou ? Hear from me :  
By all of human race death is a debt  
That must be paid, and none of mortal men  
Knows whether till to-morrow life's short space  
Shall be extended : such the dark events  
Of fortune ; never to be learned, nor traced  
By any skill. Instructed thus by me  
Bid pleasure welcome, drink, the life allowed  
From day to day esteem thine own, all else  
Fortune's. To Venus chief address thy vows—  
Of all the heavenly powers she, gentle queen,  
Kindest to man, and sweetest : all besides  
Reckless let pass, and listen to my words,  
If thou seest reason in them, as I think  
Thou dost : then bid excessive grief farewell,  
And drink with us ; master these present ills,  
And bind thy brows with garlands ; well I know  
The circling bowl will waft thy spirits to bliss,  
Now sunk in dark and sullen melancholy.  
Since we are mortal, be our minds intent



On mortal things ; to all the grave, whose brows  
With cares are furrowed, let me judge for thee,  
Life is no life, but a calamity.

ATT. These things we know ; but what becomes us now  
Ill suits with festal revelry and mirth.

HERC. A woman dies, one unrelated ; check  
Thy grief : the lords of this fair mansion live.

ATT. Live ! Knowst thou not th' afflictions of this house ?

HERC. Unless thy lord in something hath deceived me.

ATT. Liberal his mind, too liberal to the guest.

HERC. No : for a stranger dead he hath done well.

ATT. No stranger, but a near domestic loss.

HERC. Is it some sorrow which he told not me ?

ATT. Go thou with joy ; ours are our lord's afflictions.

HERC. These are not words that speak a foreign loss.

ATT. If such, thy revelry had not displeased me.

HERC. Then by my friendly host I much am wronged.

ATT. Thy coming was unseasonable ; this house  
Wanted no guest : thou seest our locks all shorn,  
Our grief and sable vests.

HERC. Who then is dead ?  
One of his children, or his aged father ?

ATT. His wife Alcestis, stranger, is no more.

HERC. What sayst thou ? And e'en so could you receive me ?

ATT. It shamed him to reject thee from his house.

HERC. O wretch, of what a wife art thou bereft !

ATT. Not she alone, we all are lost with her.

HERC. I might have thought this when I saw his eye  
Flowing with tears, his locks shorn off, and grief  
Marked on his face : but he persuaded me,  
Saying that one of foreign birth he mourned,  
And bore her to the tomb : unwillingly  
Ent'ring these gates I feasted in the house,  
My hospitable friend with such a grief  
Oppressed ; nay more, I revelled, and my head  
With garlands shaded : but the fault was thine,  
Who didst not tell me that a woe like this  
Thy house afflicted. But inform me where  
She is interred ; where shall I find her tomb ?

ATT. Right in the way that to Larissa leads  
Without the city wilt thou find her tomb.

HERC. Now my firm heart, and thou, my daring soul,  
Show what a son the daughter of Electryon,  
Alcmena of Tirynthia, bore to Jove.

This lady, new in death, behoves me save,  
And, to Admetus rend'ring grateful service,  
Restore his lost Alcestis to his house.  
This sable-vested tyrant of the dead  
My eye shall watch, not without hope to find him  
Drinking th' oblations nigh the tomb. If once  
Seen from my secret stand I rush upon him,  
These arms shall grasp him till his panting sides  
Labour for breath; and who shall force him from me,  
Till he gives back this woman? Should I fail  
To seize him there, as coming not to taste  
The spilt blood's thickening foam, I will descend  
To the drear house of Pluto and his queen,  
Which the sun never cheers, and beg her thence,  
Assured that I shall lead her back, and place her  
In my friend's hands, whose hospitable heart  
Received me in his house, nor made excuse,  
Though pierced with such a grief; this he concealed  
Through generous thought and reverence to his friend.  
Who in Thessalia bears a warmer love  
To strangers? Who, through all the realms of Greece?  
It never shall be said this generous man  
Received in me a base and worthless wretch.

ADMETUS, CHORUS.

ADM. Ah me! Ah me! How mournful this approach!  
How hateful to my sight this widowed house!  
Ah, whither shall I go? where shall I rest?  
What shall I say? or what forbear to say?  
How may I sink beneath this weight of woe?  
To misery was I born, wretch that I am;  
I envy now the dead, I long for them,  
Long to repose me in that house. No more

With pleasure shall I view the sun's fair beams,  
 No more with pleasure walk upon this earth :  
 So dear an hostage death has rent from me,  
 And yielded to th' infernal king his prey.

CHOR. Go forward, yet go forward ; to thy house  
 Retire.

ADM. Ah me !

CHOR. Thy sufferings do indeed  
 Demand these groans.

ADM. O miserable me !

CHOR. Thy steps are set in sorrow, well I know,  
 But all thy sorrow nought avails the dead.

ADM. Wretch that I am !

CHOR. To see thy wife no more,  
 No more to see her face, is grief indeed.

ADM. O, thou hast touched on that which deepest wounds  
 My mind : what greater ill can fall on man  
 Than of a faithful wife to be deprived ?  
 O that I ne'er had wedded, in the house  
 Had ne'er dwelt with her ! The unmarried state  
 I envy, and deem those supremely blest  
 Who have no children ; in one single life  
 To mourn is pain that may be well endured :  
 To see our children wasting with disease,  
 To see death ravaging our nuptial bed,  
 This is not to be borne, when we might pass  
 Our lives without a child, without a wife.

CHOR. Fate comes, resistless Fate.

ADM. Unhappy me !

CHOR. But to thy sorrows wilt thou put no bounds ?

ADM. Woe, woe, woe, woe !

CHOR. A ponderous weight indeed  
 To bear, yet bear them. Thou art not the first  
 That lost a wife : misery, in different forms  
 To different men appearing, seizes all.

ADM. Ye lasting griefs, ye sorrows for our friends  
 Beneath the earth ! Ah, why did ye restrain me ?  
 I would have cast myself into the tomb,  
 The gaping tomb, and lain in death with her,

The dearest, best of women ; there for one  
Pluto had coupled two most faithful souls,  
Together passing o'er th' infernal lake.

CHOR. I had a friend, by birth allied to me,  
Whose son, and such a son as claimed his tears,  
Died in the prime of youth, his only child ;  
Yet with the firmness of a man he bore  
His grief, though childless, and declining age  
Led him with hasty steps to hoary hairs.

ADM. Thou goodly mansion, how shall I endure  
To enter thee, how dwell beneath thy roof,  
My state thus sunk ! Ah me, how changed from that,  
When 'midst the pines of Pelion blazing round,  
And hymeneal hymns, I held my way,  
And led my loved Alcestis by her hand :  
The festal train with many a cheerful shout  
Saluted her, now dead, and me, and hailed  
Our union happy, as descended each  
From generous blood and high-born ancestry.  
Now for the nuptial song, the voice of woe—  
For gorgeous robes, this black and mournful garb—  
Attends me to my halls, and to my couch,  
Where solitary sorrow waits me now.

CHOR. This sorrow came upon thee 'midst a state  
Of happiness, a stranger thou to ills :  
Yet is thy life preserved : thy wife is dead,  
Leaving thy love ; is there aught new in this ?  
Many hath death reft of their wives before.

ADM. My friends, I deem the fortune of my wife  
Happier than mine, though otherwise it seems ;  
For never more shall sorrow touch her breast,  
And she with glory rests from various ills.  
But I, who ought not live, my destined hour  
O'erpassing, shall drag on a mournful life,  
Late taught what sorrow is. How shall I bear  
To enter here ? To whom shall I address  
My speech ? Whose greeting renders my return  
Delightful ? Which way shall I turn ? Within  
In lonely sorrow shall I waste away,

As widowed of my wife I see my couch,  
 The seats deserted where she sate, the rooms  
 Wanting her elegance. Around my knees  
 My children hang, and weep their mother lost:  
 These too lament their mistress now no more.  
 This is the scene of misery in my house:  
 Abroad, the nuptials of Thessalia's youth  
 And the bright circles of assembled dames  
 Will but augment my grief: ne'er shall I bear  
 To see the loved companions of my wife.  
 And if one hates me, he will say, "Behold  
 The man, who basely lives, who dared not die,  
 But, giving through the meanness of his soul  
 His wife, avoided death, yet would be deemed  
 A man: he hates his parents, yet himself  
 Had not the spirit to die." These ill reports  
 Cleave to me: why then wish for longer life,  
 On evil tongues thus fallen, and evil days?

## CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

My vent'rous foot delights  
 To tread the Muses' arduous heights;  
 Their hallowed haunts I love t' explore,  
 And listen to their lore:  
 Yet never could my searching mind  
 Aught, like necessity, resistless find;  
 No herb of sovereign power to save,  
 Whose virtues Orpheus joyed to trace,  
 And wrote them in the rolls of Thrace;  
 Nor all that Phœbus gave,  
 Instructing the Asclepian train,  
 When various ills the human frame assail,  
 To heal the wound, to soothe the pain,  
 'Gainst her stern force avail.

*Antistrophe 1.*

Of all the powers divine  
 Alone none dares approach her shrine ;  
 To her no hallowed image stands,  
     No altar she commands ;  
 In vain the victim's blood would flow ;  
 She never deigns to hear the suppliant vow.  
     Never to me mayst thou appear,  
 Dread goddess, with severer mien,  
 That oft in life's past tranquil scene  
     Thou hast been known to wear.  
 By thee Jove works his stern behest :  
 Thy force subdues e'en Scythia's stubborn steel :  
     Nor ever does thy rugged breast  
     The touch of pity feel.

*Strophe 2.*

And now, with ruin pleased,  
 On thee, O king, her hands have seized,  
 And bound thee in her iron chain :  
     Yet her fell force sustain.  
 For from the gloomy realms of night  
 No tears recall the dead to life's sweet light ;  
 No virtue, though to heaven allied,  
 Saves from th' inevitable doom :  
 Heroes and sons of gods have died,  
     And sunk into the tomb.  
 Dear, whilst our eyes her presence blest,  
 Dear, in the gloomy mansions of the dead ;  
 Most generous she, the noblest, best,  
     Who graced thy nuptial bed.

*Antistrophe 2.*

Thy wife's sepulchral mound  
 Deem not as common, worthless ground,  
 'That swells their breathless bodies o'er  
     Who die, and are no more.

No : be it honoured as a shrine  
Raised high, and hallowed to some power divine.  
The traveller, as he passes by,  
Shall thither bend his devious way,  
With reverence gaze, and with a sigh  
Smite on his breast, and say,  
"She died of old to save her lord ;  
Now blest among the blest : Hail, power revered ;  
To us thy wonted grace afford !"  
Such vows shall be preferred.  
But see, Admetus, to thy house, I ween,  
Alcmena's son bends his returning steps.

## HERCULES, ADMETUS, CHORUS.

HERC. I would speak freely to my friend, Admetus,  
Nor what I blame keep secret in my breast.  
I came to thee amidst thy ills, and thought  
I had been worthy to be proved thy friend.  
Thou toldst me not the obsequies prepared  
Were for thy wife, but in thy house receivdst me  
As if thou grievdst for one of foreign birth.  
I bound my head with garlands, to the gods  
Pouring libations in thy house with grief  
Oppressed. I blame this : yes, in such a state  
I blame this : yet I come not in thine ills  
To give thee pain ; why I return in brief  
Will I unfold. This woman from my hands  
Receive to thy protection, till returned  
I bring the Thracian steeds, having there slain  
The proud Bistonian tyrant ; should I fail,  
Be that mischance not mine, for much I wish  
Safe to revisit thee, yet should I fail,  
I give her to the safeguard of thy house.  
For with much toil she came into my hands.  
To such as dare contend some public games,  
Which well deserved my toil, I find proposed,  
I bring her thence, she is the prize of conquest ;  
For slight assays each victor led away

A courser ; but for those of harder proof  
The conqueror was rewarded from the herd,  
And with some female graced ; victorious there,  
A prize so noble it were base to slight.  
Take her to thy protection, not by stealth  
Obtained, but the reward of many toils ;  
The time perchance may come when thou wilt thank me.

ADM. Not that I slight thy friendship, or esteem thee  
Other than noble, wished I to conceal  
My wife's unhappy fate ; but to my grief  
It had been added grief, if thou hadst sought  
Elsewhere the rites of hospitality ;  
Suffice it that I mourn ills which are mine.  
This woman, if it may be, give in charge,  
I beg thee, king, to some Thessalian else,  
That hath not cause like me to grieve ; in Pheræ  
Thou mayst find many friends ; call not my woes  
Fresh to my memory ; never in my house  
Could I behold her but my tears would flow ;  
To sorrow add not sorrow ; now enough  
I sink beneath its weight. Where should her youth  
With me be guarded ? for her gorgeous vests  
Proclaim her young ; if mixing with the men  
She dwell beneath my roof, how shall her fame,  
Conversing with the youths, be kept unsullied ?  
It is not easy to restrain the warmth  
Of that intemperate age ; my care for thee  
Warns me of this. Or if from them removed  
I hide her in th' apartments late my wife's,  
How to my bed admit her ? I should fear  
A double blame ; my citizens would scorn me  
As light, and faithless to the kindest wife  
That died for me, if to her bed I took  
Another blooming bride ; and to the dead  
Behoves me pay the highest reverence  
Due to her merit. And thou, lady, know,  
Whoe'er thou art, that form, that shape, that air  
Resembles my Alcestis. By the gods,  
Remove her from my sight. It is too much,



I cannot bear it : when I look on her,  
Methinks I see my wife ; this wounds my heart,  
And calls the tears fresh gushing from my eyes.  
This is the bitterness of grief indeed.

CHOR. I cannot praise thy fortune ; but behoves thee  
To bear with firmness what the gods assign.

HERC. O that from Jove I had the power to bring  
Back from the mansions of the dead thy wife  
To heaven's fair light, that grace achieving for thee !

ADM. I know thy friendly will. But how can this  
Be done ? The dead return not to this light.

HERC. Check then thy swelling griefs ; with reason rule  
them.

ADM. How easy to advise, but hard to bear !

HERC. What would it profit shouldst thou always groan ?

ADM. I know it ; but I am in love with grief.

HERC. Love to the dead calls forth the ceaseless tear.

ADM. O, I am wretched more than words can speak.

HERC. A good wife hast thou lost, who can gainsay it ?

ADM. Never can life be pleasant to me more.

HERC. Thy sorrow now is new, time will abate it.

ADM. Time, sayst thou ? Yes, the time that brings me  
death.

HERC. Some young and lovely bride will bid it cease.

ADM. No more : what sayst thou ? Never could I think——

HERC. Wilt thou still lead a lonely, widowed life ?

ADM. Never shall other woman share my bed.

HERC. And think'st thou this will aught avail the dead ?

ADM. This honour is her due, where'er she be.

HERC. This hath my praise, though near allied to frenzy.

ADM. Praise me, or not, I ne'er will wed again.

HERC. I praise thee that thou'rt faithful to thy wife.

ADM. Though dead, if I betray her may I die !

HERC. Well, take this noble lady to thy house.

ADM. No, by thy father Jove let me entreat thee.

HERC. Not to do this would be the greatest wrong.

ADM. To do it would with anguish rend my heart.

HERC. Let me prevail ; this grace may find its meed.

ADM. O that thou never hadst received this prize !

HERC. Yet in my victory thou art victor with me.

ADM. 'Tis nobly said : yet let this woman go.

HERC. If she must go, she shall : but must she go?

ADM. She must, if I incur not thy displeasure.

HERC. There is a cause that prompts my earnestness.

ADM. Thou hast prevailed, but much against my will.

HERC. The time will come when thou wilt thank me for it.

ADM. Well, if I must receive her, lead her in.

HERC. Charge servants with her ! No, that must not be.

ADM. Lead her thyself then, if thy will incline thee.

HERC. No, to thy hand alone will I commit her.

ADM. I touch her not ; but she hath leave to enter.

HERC. I shall entrust her only to thy hand.

ADM. Thou dost constrain me, king, against my will.

HERC. Venture to stretch thy hand, and touch the stranger's.

ADM. I touch her, as I would the headless Gorgon.

HERC. Hast thou her hand?

ADM.

I have.

HERC.

Then hold her safe.

Hereafter thou wilt say the son of Jove

Hath been a generous guest : view now her face,

See if she bears resemblance to thy wife,

And thus made happy bid farewell to grief.

ADM. O gods, what shall I say ? 'Tis marvellous,

Exceeding hope. See I my wife indeed?

Or doth some god distract me with false joy?

HERC. In very deed dost thou behold thy wife.

ADM. See that it be no phantom from beneath.

HERC. Make not thy friend one that evokes the shades.

ADM. And do I see my wife, whom I entombed?

HERC. I marvel not that thou art diffident.

ADM. I touch her ; may I speak to her as living?

HERC. Speak to her ; thou hast all thy heart could wish.

ADM. Dearest of women, do see I again

That face, that person ? This exceeds all hope :

I never thought that I should see thee more.

HERC. Thou hast her ; may no god be envious to thee.

ADM. O, be thou blest, thou generous son of Jove !

Thy father's might protect thee ! Thou alone

Hast raised her to me ; from the realms below  
How hast thou brought her to the light of life ?

HERC. I fought with him that lords it o'er the shades.

ADM. Where with the gloomy tyrant didst thou fight ?

HERC. I lay in wait, and seized him at the tomb.

ADM. But wherefore doth my wife thus speechless stand ?

HERC. It is not yet permitted that thou hear  
Her voice addressing thee, till from the gods

That rule beneath she be unsanctified

With hallowed rites, and the third morn return.

But lead her in : and as thou'rt just in all

Besides, Admetus, see thou reverence strangers.

Farewell : I go t' achieve the destined toil

For the imperial son of Sthenelus.

ADM. Abide with us, and share my friendly hearth.

HERC. That time will come again ; this demands speed.

ADM. Success attend thee ; safe mayst thou return.

Now to my citizens I give in charge,

And to each chief, that for this blest event

They institute the dance, let the steer bleed,

And the rich altars, as they pay their vows,

Breathe incense to the gods ; for now I rise

To better life, and grateful own the blessing.

CHOR. With various hand the gods dispense our fates :

Now showering various blessings, which our hopes

Dared not aspire to ; now controlling ills

We deemed inevitable ; thus the god

To these hath given an end exceeding thought.

Such is the fortune of this happy day.



## ELECTRA.

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THE subject of this Drama is the same with that of the *Choephoræ* of *Æschylus* ; the disposition of it is different, as might be expected from the different genius of the poets. The reader, who was struck with the sublime conception, the glowing imagery, and solemn magnificence of the *Choephoræ*, will here find his soul softened with compassion for the high-born *Electra* forcibly wedded to a peasant, dwelling in a sordid cottage, and compelled to the laborious offices of a menial slave. Our own history gives us an example of the like unfeeling insolence in the low-minded rulers of our unhappy kingdom about the year 1648, who intended to apprentice the Princess *Elizabeth* to a button-maker : the poor lady escaped their malice by dying in prison at *Carisbrooke Castle*. The gentleness of *Electra* in this humble state, and her faithful attention to the domestic concerns of *Auturgus*, throw an amiableness over her character, which neither *Æschylus* nor *Sophocles*, upon their plans, could give her, and interest us warmly in her favour ; and this is but a softer shade of the same generous mind, the same virtuous sense of duty, which shows itself so fierce and determined in encouraging and assisting her brother to revenge their father's murder. The three great poets have taken different methods in the discovery of *Orestes* to his sister : in *Æschylus* this has most dignity, in *Sophocles* it is most affecting, in *Euripides* most natural. In the circumstances which lead to the agnition, as the critics call it, our poet is thought to have reflected with an ill-natured severity on *Æschylus*. "*C'est une malice d'Euripide,*" says *P. Brumoy*, "*pour tourner la recon-*

noissance d'Eschyle en ridicule." If it be so, we are sorry for so ungenerous a return for the many obligations he is under to his great master ; but, after all, it may well be supposed that the circumstances here reprobated were the popular tradition ; for had Æschylus been left to his own invention, his rich imagination would have formed something better ; and that Euripides intended only to reject the weak proofs built on this tradition, which, like the prophecy of Celæno and the completion of it in the *Æneid*, could not be passed over unnoticed, we are led to this supposition by the following circumstance. To the surmise of the faithful preserver of Orestes, that he might have returned in secret, and have paid these honours at the tomb of his father, Electra says :

Unworthy of a wise man are thy words,  
If thou canst think that to Mycenæ's realms  
My brother e'er with secret step will come,  
Fearing Ægisthus.

This is consistent with the high spirit of Electra ; but she censures as unwise not only the circumstances alleged in proof by the old man, but even the method dictated by the God of Wisdom ; and probably the whole passage intends only to show that Electra had no idea of her brother's return, and of course to heighten her surprise and joy at the discovery. The circumstances of Clytemnestra's death are managed by Sophocles with wonderful art : the scene, in which Ægisthus uncovers the body expecting to have found that of Orestes, and instantly perceives that vengeance is bursting upon him, is finely conceived, and affords an excellent subject for picture ; but the consequence of this is, that the death of Ægisthus has nothing in it affecting ; he is a malefactor led to execution. Æschylus describes the vindictive prince as rushing upon the adulterous murderer with impatient fury : Euripides is long and minute in his account ; some of the circumstances are pleasing, they all are curious, and highly valuable, as giving an exact picture of the manners and religion of the ancients. Euripides has with great judgment preserved the characters of Orestes and Electra throughout the drama, as they were at first designed by Æschylus ; this has not escaped the censure of some critics ; but the poet is defended with such strength of argument in the " Notes on the

Art of Poetry," v. 127, that any attempt to a further vindication here would be impertinent.

It may not be improper to observe that the word Auturgus signifies a man who does his own work with his own hands, and it is used by Euripides in that sense ; the translator hopes to be excused for converting it into a proper name.

The scene is near the bounds of the Argive territory, a mountainous country, and before the cottage of Auturgus.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AUTURGUS.	TUTOR.
ELECTRA.	MESSENGER.
ORESTES.	CASTOR AND POLLUX.
PYLADES.	CHORUS OF MYCENÆAN VIRGINS.

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AUTURGUS.

THOU ancient glory of this land, famed stream  
Of Inaches, thou sawst the mighty host,  
When in a thousand ships to Phrygia's strand  
The royal Agamemnon bore the war.  
The Dardan monarch slain, the towers of Troy  
And the proud city levelled with the ground,  
To Argos he returned, and many spoils  
From the barbarians rent triumphant fixed  
In the high temples. There his toils were crowned  
With conquest ; but by Clytemnestra's wiles,  
His wife, and by Ægisthus' murdering hands,  
Son of Thyestes, in his house he died ;  
Leaving the ancient sceptre, from the hand  
Of Tantalus to him derived, he fell.  
And now Ægisthus lords it o'er the land,  
His royal throne possessing, and his wife,

Daughter of Tyndarus. He, when for Troy  
He sailed, his son Orestes in his house  
And young Electra's budding beauties left.  
Orestes, by Ægisthus marked for death,  
The guardian of his father's youth by stealth  
To Strophius bore, that in the Phocian land  
He might protect him. In her father's house  
Remained Electra : her, when youth's warm bloom  
Glowed on her cheek, the high-born chiefs of Greece  
In marriage sought : through fear lest she should bear  
To any Argive sons that might revenge  
The death of Agamemnon, in the house  
Ægisthus held her, and repulsed the suit  
Of ev'ry wooer. But his gloomy fears  
Still prompting that by stealth she might bear sons  
To one of noble lineage, he resolved  
To kill her ; but her mother, though her soul  
Was fierce and ruthless, saved her from his hands :  
She for her husband's murder had some plea  
To urge, but dreaded from her children's blood  
Public abhorrence. Then Ægisthus framed  
These villainous designs : he offered gold,  
The son of Agamemnon, from this land  
Escaped, whoe'er would kill ; to me espoused  
He gives Electra ; from Mycenæ sprung  
My parents, thus far no reproach is mine,  
My race illustrious, but not blest with wealth,  
And poverty obscures my noble birth.  
To one thus sunk he gave her, that his fears  
Might likewise sink ; for should she wed a man  
Whose high rank gives him lustre, he might rouse  
The murder of her father, sleeping now,  
And vengeance then might on Ægisthus fall.  
Yet, Venus be my witness, by my touch  
She hath not been dishonoured ; she is still  
A virgin. In my humble state I scorn  
Such insult to the daughters of the great.  
I grieve too for Orestes, hapless youth,  
To me in words allied, should he return



To Argos, and behold his sister placed  
In marriage so unworthy of her birth.  
This some may deem a folly, to receive  
A virgin in my house, and touch her not;  
But let such know that by distorted rules  
They measure continence, themselves depraved.

## ELECTRA, AUTURGUS.

ELEC. O dark-browed Night, nurse of the golden stars,  
In thee this vase sustaining on my head  
I to the flowing river bend my steps  
(Not by necessity to this compelled,  
But to the gods to show the insolent wrongs  
I suffer from Ægisthus), and my griefs  
For my lost father to the wide extent  
Of ether breathe : for from the royal house  
Me my destructive mother hath driven forth,  
To gratify her husband : having borne  
T' Ægisthus other children, she hath made  
Me and Orestes outcasts from the house.

AUT. Why wilt thou thus, unhappy lady, toil,  
For my sake bearing labours, nor desist  
At my desire? Not thus hast thou been trained.

ELEC. Thee equal to the gods I deem my friend ;  
For in my ills thou hast not treated me  
With insult. In misfortunes thus to find,  
What I have found in thee, a gentle power  
Lenient of grief, must be a mighty source  
Of consolation. It behoves me then,  
Far as my power avails, to ease thy toils,  
That lighter thou mayst feel them, and to share  
Thy labour, though unbidden : in the fields  
Thou hast enough of work ; be it my task  
Within to order well. The lab'rer, tired  
Abroad, with pleasure to his house returns,  
Accustomed all things grateful there to find.

AUT. Go then, since such thy will : nor distant far  
The fountain from the house. At the first dawn

My bullocks yoked I to the field will drive,  
And sow my furrows : for no idle wretch,  
With the gods always in his mouth, can gain  
Without due labour the support of life.

## ORESTES, PYLADES.

ORES. O Pylades, thee first of all mankind  
Faithful and friendly I esteem ; alone  
Hast thou received Orestes, held me high  
In thy dear love, thus with misfortunes pressed  
And suffering, as I suffer, dreadful ills,  
Wrought by Ægisthus, whose accursed hand,  
And my destructive mother joined her aid,  
Murdered my father. But the Argive soil,  
Commanded by the god's oracular voice,  
No mortal conscious to my steps, I tread,  
His murder on his murd'ers to avenge.  
This night my father's tomb have I approached,  
Poured the warm tear, presented my shorn locks,  
And offered on the pyre the victim's blood,  
Secret from those who lord it o'er this land.  
The walls I enter not, a double charge  
At once emprising ; to the Argive bounds  
I come, that by the tyrant's spies if known  
I to another's realms may soon retire ;  
And seek my sister ; for they say that here  
In marriage joined she dwells, a virgin now  
No more : with her I would hold converse, her  
Take my associate in this deed, and learn  
All that hath passed within the walls. But now,  
For now the grey morn opes her radiant eye,  
Retire we from this public path : perchance  
Some ploughman, or some female slave, from whom  
We may gain knowledge, may in sight appear.  
And see, a female slave, her tresses shorn,  
Bears from the spring her vase ; sit we awhile,  
And question her, if haply from her words  
We may learn aught for which we hither came.

## ELECTRA.

*Strophe.*

Begin, begin, for this the hour,  
The mournful measures weeping pour.  
Is there a wretch like me on earth?  
The royal Agamemnon gave me birth,  
My mother Clytemnestra—shame  
Fall on that odious name!  
And me each tongue within Mycenæ's walls  
Th' unhappy, lost Electra calls.  
My soul to grief a prey,  
My hated life in anguish wastes away:  
My tears for thee, my father, flow,  
For in the shades below,  
By cursed Ægisthus and his barb'rous wife—  
Ah me, ah me, my miseries!—  
Basely deprived of life,  
The royal Agamemnon lies.  
Yet once more raise the tearful strain,  
The sweetly-mournful measures soothe my pain.

*Antistrophe.*

Begin, begin, for this the hour,  
The mournful members weeping pour.  
Unhappy brother, in what state,  
What house is cruel servitude thy fate,  
Thy sister, in those rooms confined  
Once by her sire assigned  
The chaste retirement of her happier years,  
Thy wretched sister left to tears,  
Tears which incessant flow  
From the deep anguish of severest woe?  
O mayst thou come (O Jove, O Jove,  
Hear from thy throne above!)

To soothe the pangs my tortured heart that rend :  
 T' avenge thy father basely slain,  
 Mayst thou to Argos bend  
 Thy weary, wand'ring foot again.  
 Take from my head this vase, that high  
 May swell the mournful nightly melody.

*Epode.*

The dismal song, the song of death,  
 To thee, my father, will I raise,  
 To thee among the shades beneath :  
 So pass my mournful days.  
 For thee my bleeding breast I tear,  
 And beat my head, and rend my hair,  
 Shorn as an off'ring to the dead :  
 Yes, poor Electra beat thy head.  
 As some broad-rolling stream along,  
 For his lost father torn away,  
 Caught in the wily net a prey,  
 The tuneful cygnet pours the song ;  
 So thee, my father, I lament,  
 In thy last bath deprived of breath,  
 Stretched on the bed of death :  
 So I deplore the curst intent  
 Formed 'gainst thy sad return from Troy,  
 The keen axe furious to destroy.  
 For thee no crown thy wife designed,  
 No festive wreath thy brows to bind,  
 But the relentless trenchant sword :  
 And, by her raging passions led,  
 Aids the base murd'rer's deed abhorred,  
 Then takes him to her bed.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

Daughter of Agamemnon, I with speed,  
Electra, to thy rustic cottage fly :  
For one, whose herds on these rude mountains feed,  
A swain, on whose good faith we firm rely,  
    Came, from Mycenæ came ;  
    The Argives, thus he says, proclaim  
    Three days of festal rites divine,  
And all the virgins haste to Juno's shrine.

ELECTRA.

*Strophe 2.*

No more, my friends, the gorgeous vest,  
Which in her happier hours Electra graced,  
    No more the gem in gold enchased,  
With vivid radiance sparkling on my breast,  
    Delight my mind : my feet no more  
    The mazy-winding dance shall tread,  
No more the train of Argive virgins lead.  
    In tears, ah me ! I melt away ;  
In tears, sad solace of each wretched day,  
    My ceaseless mis'ries I deplore.  
    My sordid toils these locks defile,  
    Around me see these vestments vile :  
Of Agamemnon's daughter this the fate ?  
    Where now my father's royal state ?  
    Where the proud glories of his name,  
And Troy recording sad her conqueror's mighty fame ?

CHORUS.

*Antistrophe 1.*

Great is the goddess : go then, with us go ;  
 Receive whate'er thy beauties may improve,  
 The gold, the vests with various dyes that glow.  
 Thinkst thou with tears th' unhonoured gods to move ?  
     Not won by sighs their aid,  
     But by pure vows with rev'rence paid,  
     The gods, to crush thy foes, will send,  
 And blessings on thy future days t' attend.

ELECIRA.

*Antistrophe 2.*

My cries, my vows, no god will hear,  
 Nor heeded they my father's spouting gore.  
     Ah me ! the murdered I deplore,  
 And for the living exile pour the tear :  
     He, distant from his native land,  
     Wanders, poor outcast, o'er the earth,  
 And seeks mean refuge at some servile hearth,  
     Dragging from realm to realm his woes,  
 Though in his veins the blood of monarchs flows.  
     I, by oppression's iron hand  
     Driven from my father's royal seat,  
     Dwell in this low obscure retreat,  
 Here waste in toils my wretched life away,  
     Or o'er the rugged mountains stray :  
     Whilst, glorying in her impious deeds,  
 My mother to her bed the blood-stained murd'rer leads.

CHOR. The sister of thy mother, Helena,  
 Hath been the cause of many ills to Greece,  
 And to thy house.

ELEC.                   Ah me ! ye female train,  
 My measures I break off : some strangers, lodged

Nigh to the cottage, from their ambush rise.  
Fly by the path, I to the house will fly ;  
Let us be swift t' escape their ruffian hands.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ORES. Stay, thou unhappy ; fear not aught from me.  
ELEC. Thee, Phœbus, that I die not, I implore.  
ORES. Others more hated would I rather kill.  
ELEC. Away, nor touch one whom thou oughtst not touch.  
ORES. There is not whom more justly I may touch.  
ELEC. Why with thy sword in ambush near my house ?  
ORES. Stay, hear ; not vain thy stay thou soon shalt own.  
ELEC. I stay ; the stronger thou, I in thy power.  
ORES. Bearing thy brother's words to thee I come.  
ELEC. Most welcome. Breathes he yet this vital air ?  
ORES. He lives : I first would speak what brings thee joy.  
ELEC. O, be thou blest for these most grateful words !  
ORES. To both in common this I give to share.  
ELEC. Where is th' unhappy outcast wand'ring now ?  
ORES. He wastes his life not subject to one state.  
ELEC. Finds he with toil what life each day requires ?  
ORES. Not so ; but mean the wand'ring exile's state.  
ELEC. But with what message art thou from him charged ?  
ORES. T' inquire, if living, where thou bearest thy griefs.  
ELEC. First, then, observe my thin and wasted state.  
ORES. Wasted with grief, so that I pity thee.  
ELEC. Behold my head, its crispéd honours shorn.  
ORES. Mourning thy brother or thy father dead ?  
ELEC. What can be dearer to my soul than these ?  
ORES. Alas ! What deemst thou are thy brother's thoughts ?  
ELEC. He, though far distant, is most dear to me.  
ORES. Why here thy dwelling from the city far ?  
ELEC. O stranger, in base nuptials I am joined.  
ORES. I feel thy brother's grief. To one of rank ?  
ELEC. Not as my father once to place me hoped.  
ORES. That hearing I may tell thy brother ; speak.  
ELEC. This is his house : in this I dwell remote.  
ORES. This house some digger or some herdsman suits.

ELEC. Generous, though poor, in reverence me he holds.

ORES. To thee what reverence doth thy husband pay?

ELEC. He never hath presumed t' approach my bed.

ORES. Through sacred chastity, or from disdain?

ELEC. Scorning my noble parents to disgrace.

ORES. How in such nuptials feels he not a pride?

ELEC. Him, who affianced me, not my lord he deems.

ORES. Thinking Orestes might revenge the wrong?

ELEC. This too he fears; yet modest is his mind.

ORES. A generous man, and one who merits much.

ELEC. If to his house the absent e'er returns.

ORES. But this debasement could thy mother brook?

ELEC. Their husbands, not their children, wives regard.

ORES. Why did Agisthus offer this base wrong?

ELEC. Thus placing me, he wished my children weak.

ORES. That from thee no avengers might arise.

ELEC. For this design may vengeance on him fall.

ORES. That yet thou art a virgin doth he know?

ELEC. He knows it not. This undisclosed we hold.

ORES. Are these, who hear us, faithful, and thy friends?

ELEC. Never thy words or mine will they disclose.

ORES. What should Orestes do, if he return?

ELEC. Canst thou ask this? How base. The time now calls—

ORES. But how thy father's murderers should he slay?

ELEC. Daring to do what they, who slew him, dared.

ORES. Couldst thou, with him, thy mother bear to kill!

ELEC. With the same axe, by which my father fell.

ORES. This may I tell him, and thy soul resolved?

ELEC. My mother's blood first shedding, might I die!

ORES. O, were Orestes nigh, to hear these words!

ELEC. If seen, I should not know him, stranger, now.

ORES. No wonder, for when parted both were young.

ELEC. Nor by my friends, save one, would he be known.

ORES. Who bore him, as they say, by stealth from death?

ELEC. The aged guardian of my father's youth.

ORES. Was thy dead father honoured with a tomb?

ELEC. As he was honoured, from the house cast forth.

ORES. Alas the barbarous deed! A sense of ills,



Which strangers suffer, wounds the human heart.  
But speak, that to thy brother I may bear,  
By thee informed, words which perchance may wound  
His ear, but which concerns him much to know.  
Those, who have knowledge, feel the tender touch  
Of pity, not th' unknowing ; yet to know  
Too much is oft the bitter source of grief.

CHOR. My soul is with the same desire inflamed.  
For, from the city distant, nought I know  
Of the ills there ; I wish to be informed.

ELEC. I would speak, if I might ; and to a friend  
May I not speak my suff'ring father's wrongs,  
And mine ? But, stranger, since to this discourse  
Thou dost enforce me, I conjure thee tell  
Orestes his calamities, and mine.

Tell him in what mean garb thou seest me clad,  
How sordid, and beneath what lowly roof,  
Born as I was to royalty, I lodge.

I, labouring at the loom the lengthened robe,  
Shall want the vest to clothe my nakedness :

And, bearing water from the flowing fount,

No more partaker of the feast, no more

Myself a virgin, 'midst the virgin train

Leading the dance, to them I bid adieu ;

To Castor also bid adieu, to whom,

Ere to the gods advanced, I was betrothed,

As from the same illustrious lineage sprung.

Meantime my mother 'midst the Phrygian spoils

Sits on her throne, the Asiatic dames,

Made by my father's conquest slaves, attend

Her state, their rich Idæan vests confined

With clasps of gold, my father's clodded gore

Yet putrid in the house ; and the same car,

In which my father rode, his murderer mounts

The sceptre, ensign of his kingly sway

O'er Greece in arms confederate, he with pride

Grasps in his bloody hands. The monarch's tomb

Unhonoured nor libations hath received,

Nor myrtle bough ; no hallowed ornament

Hath dignified the pyre. Inflamed with wine  
 My mother's husband, the illustrious lord,  
 For so they call him, tramples on the earth  
 Insultingly where Agamemnon lies ;  
 And hurling 'gainst his monument a stone,  
 Thus taunts us with proud scorn : " Where is thy son,  
 Orestes where ? Right noble is thy tomb  
 Protected by his presence." Thus he mocks  
 The absent : but, O stranger, tell him this,  
 Suppliant I beg thee. Many give the charge,  
 And I interpret it ; my hands, my tongue.  
 My mind desponding with its grief, my head  
 Shorn of its tresses, and his father. Shame,  
 Base shame it were if, when his father's arm  
 Subdued the Trojans, he should want the power  
 Alone to hurl his vengeance on one man,  
 Now in youth's prime, and from a nobler sire.

CHOR. But see, the man, thy husband, to his toils  
 Giving a respite, hastens to his house.

AUTURGUS, ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

AUT. Ha ! who these strangers, whom before my doors  
 I see ? Why come they to these rustic gates ?  
 Of me aught want they ? With young men to stand  
 Abroad, a woman's honour ill beseems.

ELEC. Thou faithful friend, let no suspicion touch  
 Thy mind : their converse truly shalt thou know.  
 These by Orestes charged, are come to me.  
 Strangers, forgive what he hath said amiss.

AUT. What say they ? Lives he ? Is he yet a man ?

ELEC. He lives, they say, and speak what wins my faith.

AUT. Remembers he his father, and thy wrongs ?

ELEC. This lives in hope : an exile's state is weak.

AUT. What from Orestes come they to relate ?

ELEC. He sent them secret to observe my ills.

AUT. Some they behold, and some thou mayst relate.

ELEC. They know them, of each circumstance informed.

AUT. Then long ago my lowly doors to them

Should have been opened. Enter ye the house ;  
And for your welcome tidings you shall share  
Such hospitable viands as the stores  
Of my poor mansion yield. You, who attend,  
What for their journey needful they have brought  
Bear in : nor you refuse ; for you are come  
Friends to a friendly man ; poor though I am,  
A sordid spirit never will I show.

ORES. Now by the gods, is this the man who holds  
Thy marriage in such holy reverence,  
Scorning to do Orestes shameful wrong ?

ELEC. The poor Electra's husband this is called.

ORES. Nature hath giv'n no outward mark to note  
The generous mind : the qualities of men  
To sense are indistinct. I oft have seen  
One of no worth a noble father shame,  
And from vile parents worthy children spring,  
Meanness oft grov'ling in the rich man's mind,  
And oft exalted spirits in the poor.  
How then discerning shall we judge aright ?  
By riches ? Ill would they abide the test ;  
By poverty ? On poverty awaits  
This ill, through want it prompts to sordid deeds ;  
Shall we pronounce by arms ? But who can judge,  
By looking on the spear, the dauntless heart ?  
Such judgment is fallacious ; for this man,  
Nor great among the Argives, nor elate  
With the proud honours of his house, his rank  
Plebeian, hath approved his liberal heart.  
Will you not then learn wisdom, you whose minds  
Error with false presentments leads astray ?  
Will you not learn by manners and by deeds  
To judge the noble ? Such discharge their trust  
With honour to the state, and to their house :  
Mere flesh, without a spirit, is no more  
Than statues in the forum : nor in war  
Doth the strong arm the dang'rous shock abide  
More than the weak : on nature this depends,  
And an intrepid mind. But we accept

Thy hospitable kindness : for the son  
 Of Agamemnon, for whose sake we come,  
 Present or not, is worthy : to this house  
 Go, my attendants ; I must enter it :  
 This man, though poor, more cheerful than the rich  
 Receives me ; to his kindness thanks are due.  
 More would it joy me if thy brother, blest  
 Himself, could lead me to his prosperous house ;  
 Yet haply he may come : th' oracular voice  
 Of Pheebus firmly will be ratified :  
 Lightly of human prophecies I deem.

*[ORESTES and his attendants enter the house.]*

CHOR. Ne'er till this hour, Electra, were our hearts  
 So warmed with joy : for fortune now perchance,  
 Though slow in her advance, may firmly stand.

ELEC. Why, thou unhappy, of thy humble house  
 Knowing the penury, wouldst thou receive  
 Such guests, of rank superior to thine own ?

AUT. Why not ? If they are noble, so their port  
 Denotes them, will they not alike enjoy  
 Contentment, be their viands mean or rich ?

ELEC. Since thou hast done what suits not thy low state,  
 To my loved father's aged guardian go ;  
 He near the river Tanus, which divides  
 The realms of Argos from the Spartan land,  
 An outcast from the city, leads his herds ;  
 Entreat him to attend thee to thy house,  
 Supplying what may entertain thy guests.  
 He will rejoice, presenting to the gods  
 His vows, when he shall hear the son, preserved  
 By him, yet lives ; for from my father's house  
 We from my mother nothing should receive ;  
 And bitter were the tidings, should she learn,  
 What most would grieve her, that Orestes lives.

AUT. These words, since such thy pleasure, I will bear  
 To the old man. But enter thou the house  
 With speed, and all things set in order there ;  
 For many things a woman, be her thoughts  
 Intent, may find to form the grateful feast ;

And in the house such plenty yet remains,  
 As for one day may well supply their wants.  
 Yet on such subjects when my thoughts are turned,  
 I deem of wealth as having mighty power  
 To give the stranger welcome, and to aid  
 The body when afflicted with disease;  
 But of small moment to the daily food  
 Which nature craves; for to supply her wants  
 An equal measure serves the rich and poor.

## CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

Ye gallant ships, that o'er the main  
     Rushed with innumerable oars,  
 Dancing amidst the Nereid train  
     To Troy's detested shores,  
 Your dark-beaked prows, whilst wanton round  
 The pipe enamoured dolphins bound,  
     The son of Thetis pleased to guide  
 Achilles, leaping on the strand  
 (With Agamemnon's martial band),  
     Where Simois rolls his tide.

*Antistrophe 1.*

The Nereids left th' Eubæan shore,  
     And arms divinely bright  
 For Vulcan's golden anvils bore :  
     O'er Pelion's rocky height,  
 O'er sacred Ossa's wood-crowned brow,  
 Which shows the nymphs the plains below,  
     They passed, the warlike father where  
 Th' heroic son of Thetis bred,  
 The pride of Greece, by glory led  
     Th' Atridæ's toils to share.

*Strophe 2.*

One, who the spoils of Troy had shared,  
 I saw in Nauplia's port, and raptured hung,  
     O son of Thetis, on his tongue,  
 Whilst he the glories of thy shield declared ;  
     On its bright orb what figures rise,  
     Terrific to the Phrygians' eyes :  
 Grasping the Gorgon's head, the verge around,  
     With waving wings his sandals bound,  
 A sculptured Perseus rises o'er the main :  
     Protector of the pastured plain,  
     Hermes, the messenger of Jove,  
 Seems with the favoured chief his golden wings to move.

*Antistrophe 2.*

Full in the midst the orb of day  
 In all its radiance blazes through the sky ;  
     The fiery coursers seem to fly,  
 And silent rolling o'er the ethereal way  
     The stars refulgent through the night,  
     To Hector's eyes a dreadful sight ;  
 High on the helmet Sphinxes glow in gold,  
     Who, whilst their prey their talons hold,  
 In triumph seem their barb'rous song to pour  
     The richly burnished hauberk o'er ;  
     Breathing fierce flames, with horrid speed  
 The dire Chimæra springs to seize Pirene's steed.

*Epode.*

Dreadful the blood-stained spear ; the car  
 Four coursers whirl amidst the war,  
 Behind them clouds of dust black-rising roll.  
 Such martial chiefs the monarch led ;  
 Yet by a hand accursed he bled,  
 By his wife's hand : her noble blood  
 From the rich streams of Tyndarus flowed,

But deeds of horror darken on her soul.  
Yet may the gods' avenging power  
On thee their righteous fury shower ;  
Yet may thy neck the falchion wound,  
Yet may I see thy blood distain the ground !

## OLD TUTOR, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

TUT. Where is my honoured mistress, my loved child,  
Daughter of Agamemnon, once my charge ?  
Steep to her house and difficult th' ascent ;  
With pain my age-enfeebled feet advance,  
Yet lab'ring onwards with bent knees I move  
To seek my friends. O daughter, for mine eyes  
Before the house behold thee, I am come,  
Bringing this tender youngling from my fold,  
These garlands, from the vases these fresh curds,  
And this small flask of old and treasured wine  
Of grateful odour ; scanty the supply,  
Yet, with aught weaker if allayed, the cup  
Will yield a grateful bev'rage. Let one bear  
Into the house these presents for thy guests.  
I with these tattered vests meanwhile will wipe  
Mine eyes, for they are wet with gushing tears.

ELEC. Why, good old man, thus wet thy tearful eyes ?  
After this length of time dost thou recall  
The memory of my ills ? or mourn the flight  
Of poor Orestes, or my father's fate,  
Whom, in thy hands sustaining, once thy care  
Nurtured, to thee and to thy friends in vain ?

TUT. In vain : but this my soul could not support ;  
For to his tomb, as on the way I came,  
I turned aside, and falling on the ground,  
Alone and unobserved, indulged my tears ;  
Then of the wine, brought for thy stranger guests,  
Made a libation, and around the tomb  
Placed myrtle branches ; on the pyre I saw  
A sable ewe, yet fresh the victim's blood,  
And clust'ring auburn locks shorn from some head :

I marvelled, O my child, what man had dared  
 Approach the tomb, for this no Argive dares :  
 Perchance with secret step thy brother came,  
 And paid these honours to his father's tomb.  
 But view these locks, compare them with thine own,  
 Whether like thine their colour : nature loves  
 In those who from one father draw their blood  
 In many points a likeness to preserve.

ELEC. Unworthy of a wise man are thy words,  
 If thou canst think that to Mycenæ's realms  
 My brother e'er with secret step will come,  
 Fearing Ægisthus : then between our locks  
 What can th' agreement be ? To manly toils  
 He in the rough palaestra hath been trained,  
 Mine by the comb are softened ; so that hence  
 Nothing may be inferred : besides, old man,  
 Tresses like-coloured often mayst thou find  
 Where not one drop of kindred blood is shared.

TUT. Trace but his footsteps, mark th' impression, see  
 If of the same dimensions with thy feet.

ELEC. How can th' impression of his foot be left  
 On hard and rocky ground ? But were it so,  
 Brother and sister never can have foot  
 Of like dimensions : larger is the man's.

TUT. But hath thy brother, should he come, no vest  
 Which thou wouldst know, the texture of thy hands,  
 In which, when snatched from death, he was arrayed ?

ELEC. Knowst thou not, when my brother from this land  
 Was saved, I was but young ? But were his vests  
 Wrought by my hands, then, infant as he was,  
 How could he now, in his maturer age,  
 Be in the same arrayed, unless his vests  
 Grew with his person's growth ? No ; at the tomb  
 Some stranger, touched with pity, sheared his locks,  
 Or native, by the tyrant's spies unmarked.

TUT. Where are these strangers ? I would see them : much  
 Touching thy brother wish I to inquire.

ELEC. See, from the house with hast'ning step they come.



ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, TUTOR, CHORUS.

TUT. Their port is noble : but th' exterior form  
Oft cheats the eye ; many of noble port  
Are base : yet will I bid the strangers hail.

ORES. Hail, hoary sire ! Electra, of what friend  
Doth chance present us the revered remains ?

ELEC. The guardian, strangers, of my father's youth.

ORES. Is this the man who bore thy brother hence ?

ELEC. The man who saved him this, if yet he lives.

ORES. Why doth he scan me with that curious eye,  
As if inspecting some bright impress marked  
On silver ? Some resemblance doth he trace ?

ELEC. In thee he pleased may mark my brother's years.

ORES. A much-loved man. Why wheels he round me thus ?

ELEC. I too am struck with wonder, seeing this.

TUT. My dear, my honoured child, address the gods.

ELEC. For what ? Some absent, or some present good ?

TUT. To hold the treasure, which the god presents.

ELEC. See, I address the gods : what wouldst thou say ?

TUT. Look now on him, my child, that dearest youth.

ELEC. I feared before thy senses were not sound.

TUT. My sense not sound, when I Orestes see !

ELEC. Why speakest thou what all my hopes exceeds ?

TUT. In him beholding Agamemnon's son.

ELEC. What mark hast thou observed, to win my faith ?

TUT. That scar above his eyebrow, from a fall  
Imprinted deep, as in his father's house  
He long ago, with thee, pursued a hind.

ELEC. I see the mark remaining from his fall.

TUT. Why the most dear delayst thou yet t' embrace ?

ELEC. No longer now will I delay : the marks  
By thee discovered are persuasive proofs.  
O thou at length returned, beyond my hopes  
Thus I embrace thee.

ORES. And my arms at last  
Thus fondly clasp thee.

ELEC. This I never thought ;

ORES. Nor could I hope it.

ELEC. Art thou he indeed?

ORES. Alone to thee in firm alliance joined,  
If well this net, my present task, I draw.

ELEC. I am assured; or never must we more  
Believe that there are gods, if impious wrongs  
Triumphant over justice bear the sway.

CHOR. Yes, thou art come, O ling'ring day,  
At length art come, and beaming bright  
Showst to Mycenæ's state his glorious light,  
Who, from his father's palace chased,  
A wretched wand'rer long disgraced,  
Cheers us with his returning ray.  
Some god, some god, my royal friend,  
Back our own radiant victory leads.  
Raise then thy hands, and to the skies  
Let for thy brother suppliant vows arise,  
That, as with daring foot he treads,  
Success, success may on his steps attend.

ORES. So may it be. With joy thy dear embrace  
I now receive: at length the time will come  
When it shall be repeated. But, old man,  
For opportune thy coming, tell me now  
What I shall do on the base murd'rer's head,  
And on my mother's, who impurely shares  
His nuptial bed, t' avenge my father's death.  
Have I no friend at Argos? not one left  
Benevolent? Are, with my fortunes, all  
Entirely lost? To whom shall I apply?  
Doth the night suit my purpose, or the day?  
Or which way shall I turn against my foes?

TUT. Amidst thy ruined fortunes, O my son,  
Thou hast no friend. Where shall the man be found  
Prompt in a prosp'rous or an adverse state  
Alike to share? But learn this truth from me,  
For of thy friends thou wholly art bereft,  
Nor doth e'en hope remain; in thine own hand  
Now, and in fortune, thou hast all wherewith  
To gain thy father's house and regal state.

ORES. What shall we do t' effect this glorious end?

TUT. Ægisthus and thy mother thou must kill.

ORES. For that I come : but how obtain that crown?

TUT. Thou canst not enter, if thou wouldst, the walls.

ORES. With guards defended, and with spear-armed hands?

TUT. Ay ; for he fears thee, nor untroubled sleeps.

ORES. Well ; let thine age some counsel then impart.

TUT. Hear me ; this now hath to my thought occurred.

ORES. Mayst thou point out and I perceive some good !

TUT. I saw Ægisthus, hither as I came.

ORES. I am attentive to thee : in what place ?

TUT. Near to those meadows where his coursers feed.

ORES. What doing ? Hope arises from despair.

TUT. A feast, it seems, preparing to the Nymphs.

ORES. Grateful for children born, or vows for more ?

TUT. I know but this, the victims were prepared.

ORES. With him what men ? Or with his slaves alone ?

TUT. No Argive there, but his domestic train.

ORES. Is there who would discover me, if seen ?

TUT. No : these are slaves who never saw thy face.

ORES. To me, if I prevail, they might be friends.

TUT. Such the slave's nature : but this favours thee.

ORES. How to his person near shall I approach ?

TUT. Beneath his eye pass when the victims bleed.

ORES. That way, it seems, some pastured fields are his.

TUT. That he may call thee to partake the feast.

ORES. A bitter guest, if so it please the gods.

TUT. Then, as th' occasion points, thy measures form.

ORES. Well hast thou said. But where my mother now ?

TUT. At Argos ; but the feast she soon will grace.

ORES. Why not together with her husband come ?

TUT. Dreading the people's just reproach, she stayed.

ORES. She knows then the suspicions of the state ?

TUT. She does : the impious woman all abhor.

ORES. How then together shall I slay them both ?

ELEC. I will form measures for my mother's death.

ORES. Fortune shall guide them to a good event.

ELEC. May she in this be aiding to us both !

ORES. It shall be so ; but what dost thou devise ?

ELEC. To Clytemnestra go, old man, and say  
To a male child Electra hath giv'n birth.

TUT. That she long since, or lately bore this child?

ELEC. Tell her the days require the lustral rites.

ORES. And how thy mother's death doth this effect?

ELEC. Hearing my child-bed illness, she will come.

TUT. She hath no tenderness for thee, my child.

ELEC. Nay, my parturient honours she will weep.

TUT. Perchance she may : but brief thy purpose speak.

ELEC. Death, certain death awaits her, if she comes.

TUT. Within these gates then let her set her feet.

ELEC. Soon to the gates of Pluto shall she turn.

TUT. Might I see this, with pleasure I would die.

ELEC. First then, old man, conduct him to the place.

TUT. The hallowed victims where Ægisthus slays?

ELEC. Then meet my mother, and relate my words.

TUT. That she shall think them uttered by thy lips.

ELEC. Now is thy task : by thee he first must bleed.

ORES. Had I a guide, this instant would I go.

TUT. Thy steps with ready zeal I will direct.

ORES. God of my country, god of vengeance, Jove !  
O, pity us ! Our sufferings pity claim.

ELEC. Pity us, for our race from thee we draw !

ORES. And thou, whose altars at Mycenæ blaze,  
Imperial Juno, give us victory,  
If in a righteous cause we ask thy aid !

ELEC. O, give us to avenge our father's death !

ORES. And thou, my father, who beneath the earth  
Hast thy dark dwelling, through unholy deeds—  
And thou, O Earth, to whom I stretch my hands,  
Great queen—protect thy children, O protect  
Thy most dear children : come, and with thee bring,  
To aid our cause, each mighty dead, that shook  
The spear with thee, and with thee conquered Troy !  
Hearst thou, so foully by my mother wronged,  
And all, the impious murderers who abhor ?

ELEC. All this, I know, my father hears ; but now  
The time demands thee. Go ! By thy bold hand,  
I charge thee, let the vile Ægisthus die :

For in the fatal contest shouldst thou fall,  
 My life too ends ; nor say thou that I live,  
 For I will plunge the sword into my throat.  
 This go I to prepare. If glad report  
 Of thy success arrive, then all the house  
 Shall echo to my joy : but shouldst thou die,  
 All otherwise. Thou hearst what I resolve.

ORES. I know it all.

ELEC. In this behoves thee much  
 To be a man. Ye women, let your voice  
 Give signal, like a flaming beacon, how  
 The contest ends : I will keep watch within,  
 Holding the keen sword ready in my hands ;  
 For never shall my body from my foes,  
 If I must fall, indecent outrage bear.

CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

The Argive mountains round,  
 'Mongst tales of ancient days  
 From age to age recorded, this remains :  
     Tuned to mellifluous lays  
     Pan taught his pipe to sound,  
 And as he breathed the sprightly swelling strains,  
     The beauteous ram with fleece of gold,  
     God of shepherds on he drove.  
     The herald from the rock above  
 Proclaims, "Your monarch's wonders to behold,  
 Wonders to sight, from which no terrors flow,  
 Go, Mycenæans, to th' assembly go."  
     With rev'rence they obey the call,  
     And fill th' Atridæ's spacious hall.

*Antistrophe 1.*

Its gates with gold o'erlaid  
 Wide oped each Argive shrine,

And from the altars hallowed flames arise ;  
 Amidst the rites divine,  
 Joying the Muse to aid,  
 Breathed the brisk pipe its sweet notes to the skies ;  
 Accordant to the tuneful strain  
 Swelled the loud-acclaiming voice,  
 Now with Thyestes to rejoice :  
 He, all on fire the glorious prize to gain,  
 With secret love the wife of Atreus won,  
 And thus the shining wonder made his own ;  
 Then to th' assembly vaunting cried,  
 " Mine is the rich Ram's golden pride."

*Strophe 2.*

Then, oh then, indignant Jove  
 Bade the bright sun backward move,  
 And the golden orb of day,  
 And the morning's orient ray :  
 Glaring o'er the western sky  
 Hurl'd his ruddy lightnings fly :  
 Clouds, no more to fall in rain,  
 Northward roll their deep'ning train :  
 Libyan Ammon's thirsty seat,  
 Withered with the scorching heat,  
 Feels nor showers nor heavenly dews  
 Grateful moisture round diffuse.

*Antistrophe 2.*

Fame hath said (but light I hold  
 What the voice of fame hath told)  
 That the sun, retiring far,  
 Backward rolled his golden car,  
 And his vital heat withdrew,  
 Sick'ning man's bold crimes to view.  
 Mortals, when such tales they hear,  
 Tremble with a holy fear,

And th' offended gods adore :  
 She, this noble pair who bore,  
 Dared to murder, deed abhorred !  
 This forgot, her royal lord.

CHOR. Ah me, ah me ! Heard you a noise, my friends ?  
 Or doth imagination startle me  
 With vain alarms ? Not indistinct the sounds,  
 Like Jove's low-mutt'ring thunder, roll along.  
 Come from the house, revered Electra, come.

## ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. What hath befall'n, my friends, what danger comes ?

CHOR. This only know I, death is in that noise.

ELEC. I heard it, distant, yet it reached my ear.

CHOR. The sound comes rolling from afar, yet plain.

ELEC. Comes from an Argive, or my friends, the groan ?

CHOR. I know not : for confused the voices rise.

ELEC. This must to me be death ; why then delay ?

CHOR. Forbear : that clear thou mayst thy fortunes know.

ELEC. No : we are vanquished : none with tidings comes.

CHOR. They will : not light t' effect a monarch's death.

## MESSENGER, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

MESS. To you, ye virgins of Mycenæ, joy  
 I bring ; to all his friends my message speaks :  
 Orestes is victorious, on the ground  
 Ægisthus, Agamemnon's murd'rer, lies.  
 Behoves you then address th' immortal gods.

ELEC. And who art thou ? How wilt thou prove thy truth ?

MESS. Thy brother's servant knowst thou not in me ?

ELEC. O thou most welcome, through my fears I scarce  
 Distinguished thee : I recognize thee now.

What, is my father's hated murd'rer dead ?

MESS. Twice, what thou wishest, I his death announce.

CHOR. All-seeing justice, thou at length art come.

ELEC. What was the manner of his death? How fell  
This vile son of Thyestes? I would know.

MESS. Departing from this house, the level road  
We entered soon, marked by the chariot-wheel  
On either side. Mycenæ's noble king  
Was there, amidst his gardens with fresh streams  
Irriguous walking, and the tender boughs  
Of myrtles, for a wreath to bind his head,  
He cropt. He saw us; he addressed us thus  
Aloud: "Hail, strangers! Who are ye, and whence,  
Come from what country?" Then Orestes said,  
"Thessalians, victims to Olympian Jove  
We, at the stream of Alpheus, go to slay."  
The king replied, "Be now my guests, and share  
The feast with me; a bullock to the Nymphs  
I sacrifice; at morn's first dawn arise,  
Then you shall go: but enter now my house."  
Thus as he spoke, he took us by the hand,  
And led us nothing loth: beneath his roof,  
Soon as we came, he bade his slaves prepare  
Baths for the strangers, that the altars nigh,  
Beside the lustral ewers, they might stand:  
Orestes then, "With lavers from the pure  
And living stream we lately have been cleansed:  
But with thy citizens these rites to share,  
If strangers are permitted, we, O king,  
Are ready, to thy hospitable feast  
Nothing averse." The converse here had end.  
Their spears, with which they guard the king, aside  
Th' attendants laid; and to their office all  
Applied their hands: some led the victim, some  
The basket bore, some raised the flames, and placed  
The cauldrons on the hearth: the house resounds.  
Thy mother's husband on the altars cast  
The salted cakes, and thus addressed his vows:  
"Ye Nymphs that haunt the rocks, these hallowed rites  
Oft let me pay, and of my royal spouse  
Now absent, both by fortune blest as now,  
And let our foes, as now, in ruin lie—"



Thee and Orestes naming. But my lord  
Far other vows addressed, but gave his words  
No utterance, to regain his father's house.  
Ægisthus then the sacrificing sword  
Took from the basket, from the bullock's front  
To cut the hair, which on the hallowed fire  
With his right hand he threw, and, as his slaves  
The victim held, beneath its shoulder plunged  
The blade ; then turning to thy brother spoke :  
" Amongst her noble arts Thessalia boasts  
To rein the fiery courser, and with skill  
The victim's limbs to sever. Stranger, take  
The sharp-edged steel, and show that fame reports  
Of the Thessalians truth." The Doric blade  
Of tempered metal in his hand he grasped,  
And from his shoulders threw his graceful robe ;  
Then, to assist him in the toilsome task,  
Chose Pylades, and bade the slaves retire.  
The victim's foot he held, and its white flesh,  
His hand extending, bared, and stript the hide  
Ere round the course the chariot twice could roll,  
And laid the entrails open. In his hands  
The fate-presaging parts Ægisthus took  
Inspecting : in the entrails was no lobe ;  
The valves and cells the gall containing show  
Dreadful events to him that viewed them near ;  
Gloomy his visage darkened. But my lord  
Asked whence his saddened aspect. He replied,  
" Stranger, some treachery from abroad I fear ;  
Of mortal men Orestes most I hate,  
The son of Agamemnon. To my house  
He is a foe." " Wilt thou," replied my lord,  
" King of this state, an exile's treachery dread ?  
But that, these omens leaving, we may feast,  
Give me a Phthian for this Doric blade,  
The breast asunder I will cleave." He took  
The steel, and cut. Ægisthus, yet intent,  
Parted the entrails ; and as low he bowed  
His head, thy brother, rising to the stroke,

Drove through his back the pond'rous axe, and rived  
 The spinal joints. His heaving body writhed  
 And quivered struggling in the pangs of death.  
 The slaves beheld, and instant snatched their spears,  
 Many 'gainst two contesting ; but my lord  
 And Pylades with dauntless courage stood  
 Opposed, and shook their spears. Orestes then  
 Thus spoke: " I come not to this state a foe,  
 Nor to my servants ; but my father's death  
 I on his murd'rer have avenged. You see  
 Th' unfortunate Orestes ; kill me not,  
 My father's old attendants." At those words  
 They all restrained their spears ; and he was known  
 By one grown hoary in the royal house.  
 Crowns on thy brother's head they instant placed,  
 With shouts of joy. He comes, and with him brings  
 Proof of his daring, not a Gorgon's head,  
 But, whom thou hatest, Ægisthus ; blood for blood,  
 Bitter requital, on the dead is fall'n.

CHOR. Now for the dance, my friend, thy foot prepare,  
 Now with joy-enraptured tread,  
 Light as the hind that seems to bound in air,  
 The sprightly measures lead.  
 Thy brother comes, and on his brows  
 A crown hath conquest placed :  
 A wreath so glorious ne'er the victor graced  
 Where famed Alpheüs flows.  
 Come then, and with my choral train  
 To Conquest raise the joyful strain.

ELEC. O light, and thou resplendent orb of day,  
 O earth, and night which I beheld before,  
 Now I view freely, freely now I breathe,  
 Now that Ægisthus, by whose murd'ring hand  
 My father fell, is dead. Whate'er my house  
 To grace the head contains, I will bring forth,  
 My friends, and crown my brother's conqu'ring brows.

CHOR. Whate'er of ornament thy house contains  
 Bring, to grace thy brother's head.  
 My choir the dance, accorded to sweet strains

Dear to the Muse, shall lead.  
For now our kings, whose honoured hand  
The sceptre justly swayed,  
Low in the dust th' oppressive tyrant laid,  
Again shall rule the land.  
Rise then, my voice, with cheerful cries,  
Attempted to thy triumph rise.

ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

ELEC. O glorious victor, from a father sprung  
Victorious in th' embattled fields of Troy,  
Orestes, for thy brows receive this crown.  
From the vain contest of the length'ned course  
Thou comest not, but victorious o'er thy foe,  
Ægisthus slain, by whom thy father bled,  
And I have been undone. Thou too, brave youth,  
Trained by a man most pious, in his toils  
Faithful associate, Pylades, receive  
From me this wreath ; for thine an equal share  
Of danger. Ever let me hold you blessed.

ORES. First, of this glorious fortune deem the gods,  
Electra, sov'reign rulers ; then to me,  
The minister of fortune and the gods,  
Give the due praise. I come not to relate  
That I have slain Ægisthus : deeds shall speak  
For me ; a proof to all, his lifeless corse  
I bring thee : treat it as thy soul inclines :  
Cast it by rav'nous beasts to be devoured,  
Or to the birds, the children of the air,  
Fix it, impaled, a prey : the tyrant now,  
Ægisthus, is thy slave, once called thy lord.

ELEC. Shame checks my tongue : yet something would I  
speak.

ORES. What wouldst thou ? Speak : thy fears are vanished  
now.

ELEC. I fear t' insult the dead, lest censures rise.

ORES. Not one of all mankind would censure thee.

ELEC. Hard to be pleased our city, prompt to blame.

ORES. Speak what thou wouldst, my sister ; for to him  
Inexpiable enmity we bear.

ELEC. Let me then speak : but where shall I begin  
Thy insults to recount ? With what conclude ?  
Or how pursue the train of my discourse ?  
I never with the opening morn forbore  
To breathe my silent plaints, which to thy face  
I wished to utter, from my former fears  
If e'er I should be free : I now am free.  
Now, to thee living what I wished to speak,  
I will recount. Thou hast destroyed my hopes,  
Made me an orphan, him and me bereft  
Of a dear father, by no wrongs enforced.  
My mother basely wedding, thou hast slain  
The glorious leader of the Grecian arms,  
Yet never didst thou tread the fields of Troy.  
Nay, such thy folly, thou couldst hope to find  
My mother, shouldst thou wed her, nought of ill  
To thee intending : hence my father's bed  
By thee was foully wronged. But let him know  
Who with forbidden love another's wife  
Corrupts, then by necessity constrained  
Receives her as his own, should he expect  
To find that chastity preserved to him,  
Which to her former bed was not preserved,  
He must be wretched from his frustrate hope.  
And what a life of misery didst thou lead,  
Though not by thee deemed ill ? Thy conscious mind  
Of thy unholy nuptials felt the guilt :  
My mother knew that she an impious man  
In thee had wedded ; and, polluted both,  
Thou hadst her fortune, she thy wickedness.  
'Mongst all the Argives this had fame divulged,  
The man obeys the wife, and not the wife  
Her husband : shameful this, when in the house  
The woman sovereign rules, and not the man.  
And when of children speaks the public voice  
As from the mother, not the father sprung,  
To me it is displeasing. He who weds

A wife of higher rank and nobler blood,  
 Sinks into nothing, in her splendour lost.  
 This truth unknown, thy pride was most deceived,  
 Thyself as great thou vauntedst, in the power  
 Of riches vainly elevate ; but these  
 Are nothing, their enjoyment frail and brief ;  
 Nature is firm, not riches ; she remains  
 For ever, and triumphant lifts her head.

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CATALOGUE DEPARTMENT  
 FOR RECLASSIFICATION

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 Of riches vainly elevate ; but these  
 Are nothing, their enjoyment frail and brief ;  
 Nature is firm, not riches ; she remains  
 For ever, and triumphant lifts her head.  
 But unjust wealth, which sojourns with the base,  
 Glitters for some short space, then flies away.  
 To women thy demeanour I shall pass  
 Unmentioned, for to speak it ill beseems  
 A virgin's tongue ; yet I shall make it known  
 By indistinct suggestion. Arrogance  
 Swelled thy vain mind, for that the royal house  
 Was thine, and beauty graced thy perfect form.  
 But be not mine a husband whose fair face  
 In softness with a virgin's vies, but one  
 Of manly manners ; for the sons of such  
 By martial toils are trained to glorious deeds :  
 The beauteous only to the dance give grace.  
 Perish, thou wretch, to nothing noble formed ;  
 Such wast thou found, and vengeance on thy head  
 At length hath burst ; so perish all, that dare  
 Atrocious deeds ! Nor deem, though fair his course  
 At first, that he hath vanquished Justice ere  
 He shall have reached the goal, the end of life.

CHOR. His deeds were dreadful ; dreadful hath he felt  
 Your vengeance. With great power is Justice armed.

ORES. So let it be. But bear this body hence,  
 My slaves ; to darkness let it be consigned ;  
 That when my mother comes, before she feels  
 The deadly stroke, she may not see the corse.

ELEC. Forbear ; to other subjects turn we now.

ORES. What, from Mycenæ see I aid advance ?

ELEC. This is no friendly aid ; my mother comes.

ORES. As we could wish, amidst the toils she runs.

ELEC. High on her car in splendid state she comes.

ORES. What shall we do ? Our mother shall we kill ?

ELEC. On seeing her hath pity seized thy heart?  
 ORES. She bore me, bred me; her how shall I slay?  
 ELEC. As she thy noble father slew and mine.  
 ORES. O Phœbus, wild and rash the charge thou gavst.  
 ELEC. Who then are sage, if Phœbus be unwise?  
 ORES. The charge to kill my mother: impious deed!  
 ELEC. What guilt were thine t' avenge thy father's death?  
 ORES. Now pure, my mother's murderer I should fly.  
 ELEC. Will vengeance for thy father be a crime?  
 ORES. But I shall suffer for my mother's blood.  
 ELEC. To whom thy father's vengeance then assign?  
 ORES. Like to the gods perchance some demon spoke.  
 ELEC. What, from the sacred tripod! Vain surmise.  
 ORES. Ne'er can my reason deem this answer just.  
 ELEC. Sink not, unmanned, to weak and timorous thoughts.  
 ORES. For her then shall I spread the fatal net?  
 ELEC. In which her husband caught by thee was slain.  
 ORES. The house I enter. Dreadful the intent:  
 Dreadful shall be my deeds. If such your will,  
 Ye heavenly powers, so let it be; to me  
 A bitter, yet a pleasing task assigned.

CLYTEMNESTRA, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Imperial mistress of the Argive realms,  
 Drawing from Tyndarus thy noble birth,  
 And sister to th' illustrious sons of Jove,  
 Who 'midst the flaming ether dwell in stars,  
 By mortals lab'ring in the ocean waves  
 In honour as their great preservers held,  
 Hail! Equal with the gods I thee revere,  
 Thy riches such, and such thy happy state;  
 Thy fortune, queen, our veneration claims.

CLYT. First from the car, ye Trojan dames, alight;  
 Then take my hand, that I too may descend.  
 The temples of the gods with Phrygian spoils  
 Are richly graced: these, from the land of Troy  
 Selected, for the daughter which I lost,  
 A small, but honourable prize, are mine.



ELEC. And may not I, for from my father's house  
I am an outcast slave, this wretched hut  
My mean abode, thy blest hand, mother, hold?

CLYT. My slaves are here : labour not thou for me.

ELEC. Why hast thou driven me from the house a slave?  
For when the house was taken, I was seized,  
As these, an orphan of my father left.

CLYT. Such were the measures which thy father planned,  
Where it beseemed him least, against his friends.  
For I will speak (though when a woman forms  
An ill opinion, from her tongue will flow  
Much bitterness) my wrongs from him received :  
These known, if for thy hatred thou hast cause,  
'Tis just that thou abhor me ; but if not,  
Why this abhorrence? Me did Tyndarus  
Give to thy father, not that I should die,  
Nor my poor children : yet he led away,  
Her nuptials with Achilles the pretence,  
To Aulis led my daughter, in whose bay  
His fleet was stationed ; on the altar there  
My Iphigenia, like a blooming flower,  
Did he mow down. Averting hostile arms  
That threatened desolation to the state,  
Or for the welfare of his house, to save  
His other children, if for many one  
A victim he had slain, the deed had found  
Forgiveness : but for Helena, because  
She was a wanton, and his faithless wife  
Her husband could not punish, for this cause  
My daughter he destroyed ; yet for these wrongs,  
Great as they were, I had not been enraged,  
Nor had I slain my husband ; but he came,  
And with him brought the raving prophetess  
Admitted to his bed, and thus one house  
Contained two wives. Women indeed are frail,  
Nor other shall I speak ; but, this inferred,  
Whene'er the husband from his honour swerves,  
From his connubial bed estranged, the wife  
Will imitate his manners, and obtain

Some other friend ; yet slander 'gainst our sex  
 Raises her voice aloud ; while those who cause  
 These trespasses, the men, no blame shall reach.  
 Had Menelaus in secret from his house  
 Been borne, ought I Orestes to have slain,  
 To save my sister's husband ? His son's death  
 How had thy father brooked ? And should not he,  
 Who slew my daughter, die ? Was I to bear  
 Patient his wrongs ? I slew him ; to that path,  
 Which only I could tread, I turned my foot,  
 Uniting with his foes ; for of his friends  
 Against him who with me would lift the sword ?  
 If, that thy father not with justice died,  
 Aught thou wouldst urge against me, freely speak.

ELEC. What thou hast said is just ; yet shame attends  
 That justice ; for the wife, if aught she knows  
 Of sober sense, should to her husband yield  
 In all things unreluctant. If thy mind  
 Dissents, nor to the measure of my speech  
 Accedes, yet let my mother her last words  
 Call to her memory ; let me freely speak.

CLYT. I now repeat them, nor retract, my child.

ELEC. But, hearing, wilt thou not inflict some ill ?

CLYT. I will not ; but with kindness will requite.

ELEC. Then I will speak, and preface thus my speech.

I wish, my mother, that a better mind  
 Were thine ; for excellence of form hath brought  
 To thee and Helena deserved praise.  
 Nature hath formed you sisters, light and vain,  
 Of Castor much unworthy. She was borne  
 Away, and by her own consent undone ;  
 Thou hast destroyed the noblest man of Greece :  
 Thy daughter's death thy pretext, thou hast slain  
 Thy husband ; but so well as I none knows,  
 Before it was decreed that she should die,  
 Whilst from Mycenæ his departure yet  
 Was recent, at the mirror didst thou form  
 The graceful ringlets of thy golden hair.  
 The wife, that in her husband's absence seeks

With curious care to set her beauty forth,  
Mark as a wanton : she with nicest skill  
Would not adorn her person to appear  
Abroad, but that she is inclined to ill.  
Of all the Grecian dames didst thou alone,  
I know, rejoice, when prosperous were the arms  
Of Troy ; but when defeated, on thine eyes  
A cloud hung dark ; for never didst thou wish  
That Agamemnon should from Troy return.  
Yet glorious was th' occasion offered thee  
The strength of female virtue to display :  
Thou hadst a husband in no excellence  
Inferior to Ægisthus : and so vile  
Thy sister's conduct, thou hadst power from thence  
The highest honour to thyself to draw ;  
For in the foulness of th' example vice  
Instructive holds a mirror to the good.  
But if my father, as thou urgest, killed  
Thy daughter, how have I to thee done wrong ?  
My brother how ? Or why, when thou hadst slain  
Thy husband, didst thou not to us consign  
Our father's house, but make it the lewd scene  
Of other nuptials purchased by that prize ?  
Nor is thy husband exiled for thy son ;  
Nor hath he died for me, though, far beyond  
My sister's death, me living hath he slain.  
If blood, in righteous retribution, calls  
For blood, by me behoves it thou shouldst bleed,  
And by thy son Orestes, to avenge  
My father : there if this was just, alike  
Is it just here. Unwise is he, who weds,  
Allured by riches or nobility,  
A vicious woman : all that greatness brings  
Must yield to that endeared domestic bliss,  
Which on the chaste though humble bed attends.

CHOR. Respecting women fortune ever rules  
In nuptials : some a source of joy I see  
To mortals ; some nor joy nor honour know.

CLYT. Always, my daughter, was thy nature formed

Fond of thy father : not unusual this :  
 Some love the men, and on their mothers some  
 With greater warmth their sweet affections place.  
 I will forgive thee : nor indeed, my child,  
 In deeds done by me do I so rejoice.  
 But do I see thee, fresh from childbirth, thus  
 Unbathed, and in these wretched vestments clad ?  
 Ah, my unhappy counsels, that I urged  
 My husband 'gainst thee to a rage too harsh !

ELEC. Too late to breathe the sigh, when thou canst  
 give

No healing medicine. My father dead,  
 Why not recall thy outcast wand'ring son ?

CLYT. I fear : my welfare I regard, not his,  
 Said to breathe vengeance for his father's death.

ELEC. Against us why thy husband so enrage ?

CLYT. Such is his nature : and impetuous thine.

ELEC. My grief is great : but I will check my rage.

CLYT. And he no longer will be harsh to thee.

ELEC. High his aspiring ; in my house he dwells.

CLYT. Seest thou what contests thou wouldst raise anew ?

ELEC. I say no more : I fear him, as I fear——

CLYT. Cease this discourse. My presence why required ?

ELEC. That I am late a mother thou, I ween,  
 Hast heard : make thou the sacrifice for me,  
 I have no skill, on the tenth rising morn  
 What for my son the rites require ; for me,  
 This my first child, experience hath not taught.

CLYT. This is her task, who aided at the birth.

ELEC. Unaided and alone I bore the child.

CLYT. So neighbourless, so friendless stands thy house

ELEC. None with the poor a friendship wish to form.

CLYT. Then I will go, and offer to the gods,  
 The days accomplished, for thy son. This grace  
 For thee performed, I hasten to the fields,  
 Where to the nymphs my husband now presents  
 The hallowed victim. My attendants, drive  
 These chariots hence, and lead the steeds to stalls ;  
 When you imagine to the gods these rites

I shall have paid, again be present here :  
My husband too behoves it me to grace.

ELEC. Let my poor house receive thee ; but take heed  
Lest thy rich vests the black'ning smoke defiles,  
There shalt thou sacrifice, as to the gods,  
Behoves thee sacrifice : the basket there  
Is for the rites prepared, and the keen blade  
Which struck the bull : beside him shalt thou fall  
By a like blow : in Pluto's courts his bride  
He shall receive, with whom in heaven's fair light  
Thy couch was shared : to thee this grace I give ;  
Thou vengeance for my father shalt give me.

CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

Refluent the waves of mischief swell,  
The forceful whirlwind veers around,  
Then in the bath my monarch fell :  
The roofs, the battlements resound ;  
The polished stones, that form the walls,  
His voice re-echo, as the hero falls,  
“ Why, barb'rous woman, by thy hand,  
After ten years of war on Phrygia's plain  
Returned victorious to my native land,  
Why, barb'rous woman, am I slain ?”

*Antistrophe.*

Now Justice, for the injured bed  
Which light Love gloried to betray,  
Turns back with vengeance on her head,  
Who dared her lord to slay.  
Long absent in the fields of fame  
Scarce to the high Cyclopean towers he came,  
Eager to shed his blood she strove ;  
With her own hand the keen-edged axe she swayed,  
With her own hand the murd'rous weapon drove,  
And low her hapless husband laid.

*Epode.*

Hapless to such a pest allied,  
 She, like a lioness, in savage pride  
 Midst shaggy forests wild that feeds,  
 Dared such atrocious deeds.

CLYT. O, by the gods, my children, do not kill      [ *Within.*  
 Your mother !

CHOR.            Heard you in the house her cry ?

CLYT. Ah me, ah me !

CHOR.                            I too lament thy fate,  
 Fall'n by thy children's hands. Th' avenging god  
 Dispenses justice when occasion calls.  
 Dreadful thy punishment ; but dreadful deeds,  
 Unhappy, 'gainst thy husband didst thou dare.  
 Stained with their mother's recent-streaming blood,  
 See, from the house they come, terrible proof  
 Of ruthless slaughter. Ah ! there is no house,  
 Nor hath been, with calamities oppressed,  
 More than the wretched race of Tantalus.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ORES. O Earth, and thou all-seeing Jove, behold  
 These bloody, these detested deeds ! In death  
 Stretched on the ground beneath my hand they lie,  
 Both lie, a sad atonement for my wrongs.

ELEC. Much to be mourned, my brother, to be mourned  
 With tears, and I the cause. Unchecked, unawed  
 I to my mother came, I boldly came  
 To her that gave me birth. Alas thy fate,  
 Thy fate, my mother ! Thou hast suffered ills,  
 And from thy children, whose remembrance time  
 Can ne'er efface, deeds ruthless, and far worse  
 Than ruthless : yet with justice hast thou paid  
 This debt to vengeance for my father's blood.

ORES. O Phœbus, vengeance from thy hallowed shrine

Didst thou command, unutterable deeds,  
 But not obscure, through thee are done, from Greece  
 The bloody bed removed. But to what state  
 Shall I now go, what hospitable house?  
 Who will receive me? Who, that fears the gods,  
 Will look on me, stained with my mother's blood?

ELEC. And whither, to what country shall I fly,  
 Wretch that I am? What nuptials shall be mine?  
 What husband lead me to the bridal bed?

ORES. Again, again thy sober sense returns,  
 Changed with the gale : thy thoughts are holy now,  
 Then ruled by frenzy. To what dreadful deeds,  
 O thou most dear, hast thou thy brother urged  
 Reluctant? Didst thou see her, when she drew  
 Her vests aside, and bared her breasts. and bowed  
 To earth her body, whence I drew my birth,  
 Whilst in her locks my furious hand I wreathed?

ELEC. With anguished mind, I know, thou didst proceed,  
 When heard thy wailing mother's piteous cries.

ORES. These words, whilst with her hand she stroked my  
 cheeks,

Burst forth, "Thy pity I implore, my son :"  
 Soothing she spoke, as on my cheeks she hung,  
 That bloodless from my hand the sword might fall.

CHOR. Wretched Electra, how couldst thou sustain  
 A sight like this? How bear thy mother's death,  
 Seeing her thus before thine eyes expire?

ORES. Holding my robe before mine eyes I raised  
 The sword, and plunged it in my mother's breast.

ELEC. I urged thee to it : I too touched the sword.

CHOR. Of deeds most dreadful this which thou hast done.  
 Cover thy mother's body ; in her robes  
 Decent compose her wounded limbs.—Thou gavst  
 Being to those who were to murder thee.

ELEC. Behold my friends, and not my friends, we wrap  
 Her robes around her, to our house the end  
 Of mighty ills.

CHOR. But see, above the house  
 What radiant forms appear? or are they gods

Celestial? Mortals through th' ethereal way  
Walk not : but why to human sight disclosed ?

CASTOR *and* POLLUX.

Hear, son of Agamemnon : for to thee  
Thy mother's brothers, twin-born sons of Jove,  
Castor, and this my brother Pollux, speak.  
Late having calmed the ocean waves, that swelled  
The lab'ring vessel menacing, we came  
To Argos, where our sister we beheld,  
Thy mother, slain. With justice vengeance falls  
On her : in thee unholy is the deed.  
Yet Phœbus, Phœbus—— But, my king is he,  
I will be silent : yet, though wise, he gave  
To thee response not wise : but I must praise  
Perforce these things. Thou now must do what Fate  
And Jove decree. To Pylades affy  
Electra ; let him lead her to his house  
His bride : but leave thou Argos ; for its gates,  
Thy mother slain, to thee is not allowed  
To enter ; for the Furies, hounds of hell,  
Will chase thee, wand'ring, and to madness whirled.  
Go then to Athens, seat of Pallas, clasp  
Her hallowed image : that they touch thee not  
She o'er thy head her Gorgon shield will hold.  
They from her dreadful dragons will start back  
Appalled. The mount of Mars is there, where first  
On blood the gods sate judges, when enraged  
That by unhallowed nuptials wrong had stained  
His daughter, Mars, to ruthless vengeance fired,  
Slew Halirrhothius, of ocean's lord  
The son. Most righteous from that time is held  
The judgment there, and by the gods confirmed :  
There thou must make appeal, this bloody deed  
Be there decided : from the doom of blood  
Absolved the equal numbers of the shells  
Shall save thee that thou die not ; for the blame  
Apollo on himself will charge, whose voice  
Ordained thy mother's death : in future times



This law for ever shall be ratified,  
 The votes in equal number shall absolve.  
 At this the dreadful goddesses with grief  
 Deep-wounded through the yawning earth shall sink  
 E'en at the mount ; thence an oracular gulf  
 Hallowed, revered by mortals. On the banks  
 Of Alpheus, the Lycæan temple near,  
 Thou must inhabit an Arcadian state.  
 And from thy name the city shall be called.  
 This I have said to thee ; but in the earth  
 The citizens of Athens shall entomb  
 The body of Ægisthus : the last rites  
 Due to thy mother Menelaus shall pay,  
 At Nauplia late from vanquished Troy arrived,  
 And Helena. From Egypt, from the house  
 Of Proteus, she returns : to Ilion's towers  
 She went not ; but, that strife and bloody war  
 'Mongst mortal men might rise, an imaged form  
 Resembling Helena Jove sent to Troy.  
 This virgin now let Pylades receive  
 His bride, and home to the Achaian land  
 Conduct her. Him, to thee in words allied,  
 To Phocis let him lead, and give him there,  
 Just to his modest virtue, ample wealth.  
 Thou to the narrow Isthmus bend thy steps,  
 Thence speed thee to the blest Cecropian state.  
 The fated doom, assigned for blood, fulfilled,  
 Thou shalt be happy, from thy toils released.

CHOR. O sons of Jove, may we presume t' approach,  
 And converse with you be allowed to hold ?

CAST. You may ; no curse this blood derives on you.

ORES. May I address you, sons of Tyndarus ?

CAST. Thou mayst : to Phœbus this dire deed I charge.

CHOR. Gods as you are, and brothers to the slain,  
 Why from the house did not your power avert  
 This deadly ill ?

CAST. The dire necessity  
 Of fate impelled it, and the voice unwise  
 Of Phœbus from his shrine,

ELEC. But me what voice  
Of Phœbus urged, what oracle, that I  
The murderer of my mother should become ?

CAST. Common the actions, common too the fates.  
One demon, hostile to your parents, rent  
The hearts of both.

ORES. For such a length of time  
Not seen, loved sister, am I torn so soon  
From thy dear converse, leaving thee so soon,  
And left ?

CAST. She hath a husband, and a house,  
Nor suffers aught severe, save that she leaves  
The Argive state.

ORES. And what severer woe  
Can rend the anguished heart, than to be driv'n  
An outcast from our country ? I must leave  
My father's house, and for my mother's blood  
The sentence passed by foreign laws abide.

CAST. Resume thy courage : to the sacred seat  
Of Pallas shalt thou come ; be firm, endure.

ELEC. O my loved brother, clasp, O clasp my breast  
Close to thy breast. For from our father's house  
A mother's curse hath torn us, dreadful curse !

ORES. Thus let me clasp thee : o'er me, as now dead,  
As o'er my tomb thy lamentations pour.

CAST. Ah; thou hast uttered sorrows e'en to gods  
Mournful to hear. In me, in heaven's high powers  
Is pity for the woes of mortal men.

ORES. I shall no more behold thee.

ELEC. And no more  
Shall I come near thy sight.

ORES. No more with thee  
Shall I hold converse : this my last address.

ELEC. Farewell, Mycæne ! And you, virgins, born  
In the same state with me, farewell, farewell !

ORES. O thou most faithful, dost thou go e'en now ?

ELEC. I go ; but dew my softened eyes with tears.

ORES. Go, Pylades, go thou with joy, and wed  
Electra.

CAST.       Them the nuptial rites await.  
Haste thou to Athens, fly these hounds of hell ;  
For 'gainst thee they their hideous steps advance,  
Gloomy and dark, their hands with serpents armed,  
Rejoicing in the dreadful pains they give.  
To the Sicilian sea with speed we go,  
To save the vessels lab'ring in the waves.  
But to the impious through th' ethereal tract  
We no assistance bring. But, those to whom  
Justice and sanctity of life is dear,  
We from their dang'rous toils relieve, and save.  
Let no one then unjustly will to act,  
Nor in one vessel with the perjured sail ;  
A god to mortals this monition gives.

CHOR. Oh, be you blest ! And those, to whom is giv'n  
Calmly the course of mortal life to pass  
By no affliction sunk, pronounce we blest.



## ORESTES.

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To the *Choephoræ* of *Æschylus* we owe the "*Electra*" and "*Orestes*" of *Euripides*, and particularly that wonderful scene in which the madness of *Orestes* is represented. This was touched with a masterly hand by the great father of tragedy; but *Euripides*, as hath been observed before, had the skill to give this sketch its finishing, and to heighten it with the warmest glow of colouring. Our poet is here, as *Longinus* describes him, like a lion that at first disregards his assailants, but, as soon as he feels the spear, lashes himself up to rage, and rushes on with impetuous ardour. If his genius did not of itself carry him to the sublime, he has here forced his nature to the true tragic elevation. Here, as the critic finely observes, the poet himself saw the *Furies*; and what his imagination so finely conceived, he forced his audience almost to see. *Euripides*, indeed, particularly studied to enrich his tragedies with these two passions, Love and Madness; and he succeeded very happily in them. *Shakespeare* knew well how to paint the horrors of an imagination disturbed with the consciousness of guilt, and all that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart, when *Macbeth* felt

His secret murders sticking on his hands :

but the frenzy of *Orestes* receives a peculiar heightening from the tenderness with which the scene opens and concludes; we have here all the sublime conception and noble daring of *Æschylus* united with that sympathetic softness which characterizes *Euripides*.

As we form our first acquaintance with these Grecian princes

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from Homer, and imbibe an early veneration for their noble qualities embellished by the graces of his poetry, we are hurt at finding the gallant Menelaus, the intrepid hero, the affectionate brother, represented as an ungrateful, unfeeling, timid, designing poltroon. Aristotle (*Poet.* c. 13) is generally understood as censuring the poet for this unnecessary depravation of the hero's manners; but the words of the critic are so concise, and derive so little light from the connection, that they may be considered as a mysterious oracular sentence which wants an expounder; perhaps it excuses the poet upon the necessity, and indeed it is not easy to conceive how the drama, had it given to Menelaus other manners, could have been worked up to this terrible height of tragic distress.

But a stronger and more important censure must ever fall on the sanguinary spirit of revenge which breathes through this drama. Even Tyndarus, who professes the highest reverence for the laws, and declares his resolution to support them, urges the death of Orestes and Electra, though he acknowledges that the wisdom of their ancestors allowed the offenders to atone their guilt by banishment: thus his argument confutes itself, and he is a fine image of a person who deceives even himself with the pretext of justice, by viewing things through the false medium of passion. The cool and dispassionate Pylades proposes to kill Helena, because her death would afflict the heart of Menelaus with grief: Orestes readily engages in the horrid design: the Chorus, the faithful guardian of virtue, approves it: and Electra, far from expressing any abhorrence of this cruel murder, advises her brother to seize Hermione, and, should Menelaus refuse to save their lives, to plunge the sword into her breast. We may be assured that these sentiments were received with approbation, because the tender Virgil, whose heart was alive to all the feelings of humanity, hath adopted them, and given them to his pious Æneas:

Extinxisse lumen nefas, et sumptuose merentis  
Laudaber prenas: animumpue explesse iuvat  
Ultreus flammæ, et cineres satiasse meorum.

*Æneid.* ii. 585.

But it should be remembered that this savage and sanguinary spirit does not characterize Orestes or Æneas; it was general

in those ages, when not to revenge an injury was considered as a mark of a base and servile mind : their morality allowed, and their religion sanctified, such revenge. If our minds are more enlightened, and our manners more humanized, we know from whence we derive the advantage.

The scene is in the royal palace at Argos.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ELECTRA.  
HELENA.  
ORESTES.  
MENELAUS.  
TYNDARUS.

PYLADES.  
MESSENGER.  
PHRYGIAN SLAVE.  
CHORUS OF ARGIVE VIRGINS.

ELECTRA.

THERE is not in the stores of angry heaven  
Aught terrible, affliction or distress,  
But miserable man bears its full weight.  
E'en Tantalus, the son of Jove, the blest  
(Not to malign his fate), hangs in the air,  
And trembles at the rock, which o'er his head  
Projects its threat'ning mass ; a punishment  
They say, for that to heaven's high feast admitted,  
A mortal equal with th' immortals graced,  
He curbed not the intemperance of his tongue ;  
The sire of Pelops he, of Atreus this,  
For whom the Fates weaving a diadem  
Wove discord with the thread, to kindle war  
Betwixt the brothers, Atreus and Thyestes.  
But why recite things horrible to tell ?  
Him Atreus feasted, having slain his sons.  
From Atreus (may oblivion hide the rest)  
Th' illustrious Agamemnon, if illustrious,

And Menelaus had birth ; A royal  
Of Crete their mother . Menelaos espoused  
The fatal Helen, by the gods abhorred.  
Th' imperial Agamemnon wooed the bed  
Of Clytemnestra, memorable to Greece ;  
From her three daughters sprung, Chrysothemis  
And Iphigenia, and myself Electra,  
One son, Orestes, from this wicked mother,  
Who in th' inextricable robe extended  
Her husband murdered, for a cause which ill  
Becomes a virgin's modest lips t' unfold.  
Th' injustice of Apollo must I blame ?  
Orestes he commands to slay his mother,  
Nor bears to all the glory of the deed  
Not disobedient to the god he slew her.  
I had my share, such as a woman might,  
And Pylades assisted in the act.  
Since then the poor Orestes pines away  
Impaired with cruel sickness ; on his bed  
He lies ; his mother's blood to frenzy whirls  
His tortured sense : th' avenging powers, that haunt  
His soul with terrors thus, I dare not name.  
The sixth day this, since on the hallowed pile  
My slaughtered mother purged her stains away,  
No food hath passed his lips, no bath refreshed  
His limbs ; but in his garments covered close,  
When his severe disease abates a little,  
He melts in tears ; and sometimes from his couch  
Starts furious, like a colt burst from his yoke.  
Meantime the state of Argos hath decreed  
That shelt'ring roof, and fire, and conference  
Be interdicted to us matricides.  
And this decisive day the states pronounce  
Our doom, to die crush'd with overwhelming stones,  
Or by th' avenging sword plunged in our breasts.  
Yet have we one small ray of bright'ning hope,  
Hope that we die not : for from Troy returned  
After long wand'rings Menelaus arrives,  
His vessels in the Nauplian harbour moored,



And to this strand impels his eager oar ;  
 But the woe-working Helen in the shades  
 Of shelt'ring night, lest some, whose sons were slain  
 Beneath the walls of Troy, seeing her walk  
 In day's fair light, with vengeful rage might rise,  
 And crush the shining mischief, first he lands,  
 And sends her to our house : there now she is,  
 Weeping her sister's fate and our afflictions.  
 Yet 'midst her grief this comfort she enjoys,  
 Hermione, her virgin daughter, whom  
 At Sparta, when she sailed for Troy, she left,  
 The father to my mother's care consigned ;  
 In her delighted she forgets her woes.  
 But my quick eye glances to each access,  
 If Menelaus advancing I might see.  
 Weak help from others, if not saved by him :  
 The house of the unhappy hath no friend.

## ELECTRA, HELENA.

HEL. Daughter of Clytemnestra and the chief  
 That drew from Atreus his illustrious birth,  
 Virgin of ripest years, how is it, say,  
 With thee, unhappy, and the wretch Orestes,  
 Who in his mother's blood imbrued his hands ?  
 With thee conversing I am not polluted,  
 Charging the crime on Phœbus. Yet I mourn  
 My sister's fate ; for since I sailed to Troy,  
 Urged to that madness by th' offended gods,  
 These eyes have not beheld her ; yet, her loss  
 Deploring, at her fortunes drop the tear.

ELEC. Why should I tell thee what thine eyes behold,  
 The race of Agamemnon in distress ?  
 Myself attendant on th' unhappy dead,  
 But that he breathes a little he is dead.  
 Sit sleepless : yet reproach I not his ills.  
 But thou art happy, happy is thy husband ;  
 To us in our calamities ye come.

HEL. How long on this sick-bed hath he been laid ?

ELEC. E'er since he shed her blood who gave him breath.

HEL. Ah, wretch ! Ah, wretched mother thus to perish !

ELEC. Such our lost state I sink beneath our ills.

HEL. Do me one grace I beg thee by the gods.

ELEC. As watching at my brother's couch I may.

HEL. Wilt thou go for me to my sister's tomb ?

ELEC. My mother's dost thou mean ? And wherefore go ?

HEL. These locks and my libations to present.

ELEC. What hinders but thou visit thy friend's tomb ?

HEL. And show me to the Grecians ? Shame forbids.

ELEC. Too late discreet ; when shameless from thy house——

HEL. Just is thy censure, but not friendly to me.

ELEC. And at Mycenæ dost thou feel this shame ?

HEL. I dread the fathers, whose sons died at Troy.

ELEC. Against thee loud the voice of Argos cries.

HEL. Oblige me then, and free me from this fear.

ELEC. I could not look upon my mother's tomb.

HEL. To send these offerings by a slave were shame.

ELEC. Hermione, thy daughter, why not send ?

HEL. A virgin 'midst the crowd ! Indecent this.

ELEC. The favours of the dead, who trained her youth  
With fond affection, thus she might repay.

HEL. 'Tis justly urged : I will obey thee, virgin,  
And send my daughter ; for thy words are wise.

Hermione, come hither : to the tomb

Of Clytemnestra these libations bear,

And these my locks ; there pour this honied bowl

Foaming with milk and wine ; on the high mound,

Addressing thus the dead, " These hallowed gifts

Helen, thy sister, offers, who through fear

Approaches not thy tomb, dreading the crowd

Of Argos." Bid her be propitious to us,

To me, to thee, my husband, and these two,

These wretched two, whom Phœbus hath undone.

Then promise all that to a sister's shade

A sister should bestow : go, my child, haste,

Present these gifts ; then speed thy quick return.

ELEC. O nature, in the bad how great an ill !

[*Alone.*

But in the virtuous strong thy power to save.  
 See, she hath shorn th' extremity of her locks,  
 Anxious of beauty, the same woman still !  
 May the gods hate thee, as thou hast ruined me,  
 And him, and universal Greece !—Ah me,  
 My loved companions come, whose friendly grief  
 Attunes their sad notes to my mournful strains.  
 He sleeps now ; they will wake him, and my eyes  
 Will melt in tears, when I behold him rave.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. Dearest of women, softly set your feet,  
 Not to be heard ; gently advance ; no noise.  
 Kind is your friendship : but t' awake him now  
 From this sweet rest would be a grief to me.

CHOR. Silence, silence ! Softly tread :

Nor foot be heard, nor sound, nor noise.

ELEC. This way far, far from the bed.

CHOR. I obey.

ELEC. Hush, let thy voice

Steal on my ear

Soft as the whispers of the breathing reed.

CHOR. Soft as the whispers of the breathing reed

My voice shall steal upon thy ear.

ELEC. Ay, thus, low, low ; softly come near ;

Come softly, friends, and tell me why

This visit. A long sleep hath closed his eye.

CHOR. Doth hope then brighten on his ill ?

ELEC. Alas, what hope ? Behold him lie ;

He breathes, a little breathes, and still

Heaves at short intervals a sigh.

CHOR. Unhappy state !

ELEC. Death were it, should you, as thus loud you weep,

Fright from his eyelids the sweet joys of sleep.

CHOR. Yet wail I his unhappy state,

Abhorred deeds of deadly hate,

Rage of vindictive, tort'ring woes,

Which the relentless powers of heaven impose.

ELEC. Unjust, unjust the stern command,  
 The stern command Apollo gave  
 From Themis' seat, his ruthless hand  
 In blood, in mother's blood to lave.

CHOR. Ah, turn thine eye.

He stirs, he moves, rolled in the cov'ring vest.

ELEC. Wretch, thy rude clamours have disturbed his rest.

CHOR. And yet I think sleep locks his eye.

ELEC. Wilt thou be gone? hence wilt thou fly,  
 That quiet here again may dwell?

CHOR. Again composed he sleeps again.

ELEC. 'Tis well.

CHOR. Awful queen, whose gentle power

Brings sweet oblivion of our woes,

And in the calm and silent hour

Distils the blessings of repose,

Come awful Night,

Come from the gloom of Erebus profound,

And spread thy sable-tinctured wings around ;

Speed to this royal house thy flight ;

For pale-eyed Grief, and wild Affright,

And all the horrors of Despair,

Here pour their rage, and threaten ruin here.

ELEC. Softly let your warblings flow ;

Further, a further distance keep ;

The far-off cadence sweet and low

Charms his repose, and aids his sleep.

CHOR. Tell us, what end

Awaits his mis'ries ?

ELEC. Death : that end I fear.

He tastes no food.

CHOR. Death then indeed, and near.

ELEC. When Phœbus gave the dire command

To bathe in mother's blood his hand,

By whom the father sunk in dust,

He doomed us victims.

CHOR. Dire these deeds, but just.

ELEC. She slew, she died.—Thy hand abhorred

In dust my bleeding father laid :

And for thy blood, in vengeance poured,  
 We perish, perish as the dead.  
 The shadowy train  
 Thou joinest : but my life shall waste away  
 In tears the night, in sighs and groans the day.  
 But, ah ! to whom shall I complain !  
 Nor child nor husband soothes my pain :  
 For ever drag I my distress,  
 Sigh, mourn, and weep in lonely wretchedness.

CHOR. Go nearer, royal virgin ; nearer view him,  
 That under this soft sleep the sleep of death  
 Deceive thee not : I like not this still rest.

ORESTES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ORES. O gentle Sleep, whose lenient power thus soothes  
 Disease and pain, how sweet thy visit to me,  
 Who wanted thy soft aid ! Blessing divine,  
 That to the wretched givest wished repose,  
 Steeping their senses in forgetfulness !—  
 Where have I been ! Where am I ? How brought hither ?  
 My late distraction blots remembrance out.

ELEC. My most dear brother, oh, what heart-felt joy  
 To see thee lie composed in gentle sleep !  
 Wilt thou I touch thee ? Shall I raise thee up ?

ORES. Assist me then, assist me ; from my mouth  
 Wipe off this clotted foam ; wipe my moist eyes.

ELEC. Delightful office, for a sister's hand  
 To minister relief to a sick brother.

ORES. Lie by my side, and from my face remove  
 These squalid locks ; they blind my darkened eyes.

ELEC. How tangled are the ringlets of thy hair,  
 Wild and disordered through this long neglect :

ORES. Pray lay me down again : when this ill frenzy  
 Leaves me, I am very feeble, very faint.

ELEC. There, there : the bed is grateful to the sick,  
 A mournful, but a necessary tenure.

ORES. Raise me again ; more upright ; bend me forward.

CHOR. The sick are wayward through their restlessness.

ELEC. Or wilt thou try with slow steps on the ground  
To fix thy feet? Variety is sweet.

ORES. Most willingly: it hath the show of health;  
The seeming hath some good, though void of truth.

ELEC. Now, my loved brother, hear me, whilst the Furies  
Permit thy sense thus clear and undisturbed.

ORES. Has thou aught new? If good, I thank thee  
for it;

If ill, I have enough of ill already.

ELEC. Thy father's brother, Menelaus, arrives;  
His fleet rides anchored in the Nauplian bay.

ORES. Comes he then? Light on our afflictions dawns:  
Much to my father's kindness doth he owe.

ELEC. He comes; and, to confirm what now I say,  
Brings Helena from Ilium's ruined walls.

ORES. More to be envied, were he saved alone;  
Bringing his wife, he brings a mighty ill.

ELEC. The female line of Tyndarus was born  
To deep disgrace, and infamous through Greece.

ORES. Be thou unlike them then; 'tis in thy power;  
And further than in words thy virtue prove.

ELEC. Alas, my brother, wildly rolls thine eye;  
So quickly changed! the frenetic fit returns.

ORES. Ah, mother! Do not set thy Furies on me.  
See, how their fiery eyeballs glare in blood,  
And wreathing snakes hiss in their horrid hair!  
There, there they stand, ready to leap upon me.

ELEC. Rest thee, poor brother, rest thee on thy bed;  
Thou seest them not; 'tis fancy's coinage all.

ORES. O Phœbus, they will kill me, these dire forms,  
These Gorgon-visaged ministers of hell!

ELEC. Thus will I hold thee, round thee throw mine arms,  
And check th' unhappy force of thy wild starts.

ORES. Off, let me go! I know thee, who thou art,  
One of the Furies; and thou grapplest with me,  
To whirl me into Tartarus. Avaunt!

ELEC. What shall I do? Ah me, where shall I seek  
Assistance, since th' unfriendly god frowns on us!

ORES. Bring me the bow of horn which Phœbus gave me,

And with it bade me drive these fiends away,  
Should they affright me with their madd'ning terrors.

ELEC. Shall any god by mortal hands be wounded?

ORES. Should she not instant vanish from my sight.  
Heard you the clang? Saw you the wingéd shaft  
Bound from the distant-wounding bow? Ha, ha!  
Here yet! On swift wings mount th' ethereal air,  
And there impeach the oracle of Phœbus.—

Whence this disquiet? Why thus pants my breath?

Ah, whither am I wandered from my bed?

For from the storm the high-swoln waves subside.

Why dost thou weep, my sister? Why decline

Thy drooping head, and hide it in thy vest?

I blush to give thee part in my disease,

And wound with grief thy virgin tenderness.

Let not my ills be thus infectious to thee;

Thou barely didst assent; I did the deed,

I shed her blood. But Phœbus I must blame,

Who urged me to this most unholy act;

Then, save with soothing words, assist me not.

Had these eyes seen my father, had I asked him

In duty if I ought to slay my mother,

I think he would have prayed me not to plunge

My murdering sword in her that gave me birth;

Since he could not revisit heaven's sweet light,

And I must suffer all these miseries.

But now unveil thy face and dry thy tears,

My sister, though afflictions press us sore:

And when thou seest me in these fitful moods,

Soothe my disordered sense, and let thy voice

Speak peace to my distraction; when the sigh

Swells in thy bosom, 'tis a brother's part

With tender sympathy to calm thy griefs;

These are the pleasing offices of friends.

But to thy chamber go, afflicted maid,

There seek repose. close thy long-sleepless eyes,

With food refresh thee, and th' enlivening bath.

Shouldst thou forsake me, or with too close tendance

Impair thy delicate and tender health,

Then were I lost indeed ; for thou alone,  
Abandoned as I am, art all my comfort.

ELEC. Should I forsake thee ! No ; my choice is fixed ;  
And I will die with thee, or with thee live,  
Indifferent for myself ; for shouldst thou die,  
What refuge shall a lonely virgin find,  
Her brother lost, her father lost, her friends  
All melted from her ?—Yet, if such thy wish,  
I ought t' obey : recline thee on thy couch,  
Nor let these visionary terrors fright thee ;  
There rest ; though all be fancy's coinage wild,  
Yet Nature sinks beneath the violent toil.

CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

Awful powers, whose rapid flight  
Bears you from the realms of night  
To hearts that groan, and eyes that weep,  
Where you joyless orgies keep,  
Ye gloomy powers, that shake the affrighted air,  
And armed with your tremendous rod,  
Dealing terror, woe, despair,  
Punish murder, punish blood,  
For Agamemnon's race this strain,  
This supplicating strain, I pour ;  
No more afflict his soul with pain,  
Nor torture him with madness more :  
Breathe oblivion o'er his woes,  
Leave him, leave him to repose.  
Unhappy youth, what toils are thine,  
Since Phœbus from his central shrine  
Bade thee unsheath th' avenging sword,  
And Fate confirmed th' irrevocable word !



*Antistrophe.*

Hear us, king of gods, O hear,  
 Where is soft-eyed Pity, where?  
 Whence, to plunge thee thus in woes,  
 Discord stained with gore arose?  
 What vengeful Demon thus with footstep dread,  
 Trampling the blood-polluted ground,  
     Sternly cruel joys to spread  
     Horror, rage, and madness round?  
 Woe, woe is me! In man's frail state  
 Nor height nor greatness firm abides:  
 On the calm sea secure of fate,  
 Her sails all spread, the vessel rides:  
     Now th' impetuous whirlwinds sweep,  
     Roars the storm, and swells the deep,  
 Till with the furious tempest tost  
 She sinks in surging billows lost.  
 Yet firm their fate will I embrace,  
 And still revere this heaven-descended race.

CHOR. But see, the royal Menelaus advances:  
 That awe-commanding and majestic port  
 Denotes him of the race of Tantalus.—  
 Illustrious leader of a thousand ships,  
 That bore to Asia's strand thy martial host,  
 All hail! Good fortune guides thee, and the gods,  
 Fav'ring thy vows, have blessed thy conq'ring arms.

## MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

MEN. From Troy returned, with pleasure I behold  
 This royal house, with pleasure mixed with grief:  
 For never saw I house encompassed round  
 With such afflictions. Agamemnon's fate,  
 How by his wife he perished, I long since  
 At Malea learned, when rising from the waves  
 Confessed to open view the sailors' prophet,

Unerring Glaucus, the dire bath disclosed,  
The wife, and each sad circumstance of blood ;  
A tale, that harrowed up my soul with grief,  
And wrung the tear from the stern veteran's eye.  
But to the Nauplian coast arrived, my wife  
First landed, when I hoped with joy to fold  
Orestes and his mother in my arms,  
As happy now, a wave-washed fisherman  
Told me that Clytemnestra is no more,  
Slain by th' unholy sword. But, virgins, say  
Where is Orestes, who these horrid ills  
Hath dared ? For when the war called me to Troy,  
An infant in his mother's arms I left him,  
That now, if seen, his form would be unknown.

ORES. He whom thou seekst am I : I am Orestes.  
To thee, O king, will I unfold my woes,  
And willingly : but first I grasp thy knees,  
And pour my plain unornamented prayer :  
Save me ; for thou 'midst my distress art come.

MEN. Ye powers of heaven, what do mine eyes behold ?  
One from the regions of the dead returned !

ORES. Well hast thou said : I view the light indeed,  
But do not live ; such are my miseries.

MEN. How wild, how horrid hangs thy matted hair !

ORES. The real, not th' apparent, racks my soul.

MEN. Thy shrunk and hollow eye glares dreadfully.

ORES. My whole frame wastes ; nought, save my name, is left.

MEN. Reason revolts at this thy squalid form.

ORES. Alas, I am the murderer of my mother.

MEN. I have heard it : spare mine ear the tale of woe.

ORES. I will : yet heaven is rich in woes to me.

MEN. What are thy sufferings ? What disease consumes thee ?

ORES. Conscience : the conscious guilt of horrid deeds.

MEN. How sayst thou ? Wisdom suffers when obscure.

ORES. A pining melancholy most consumes me.

MEN. Dreadful its power, but not immedicable.

ORES. And frenzy, fierce t' avenge my mother's blood.

MEN. When did its rage first seize thee ? What the day ?

ORES. The day I raised my hapless mother's tomb,

MEN. What, in the house, or sitting at the pyre?

ORES. By night, as from rude hands I guard her bones.

MEN. Was any present, to support thy weakness?

ORES. My Pylades, who aided in her death.

MEN. What phantoms frighten thy disordered sense?

ORES. Three virgin forms I see gloomy as night.

MEN. Whom thy words mark I know, but will not name.

ORES. Awful they are : forbear irreverent words.

MEN. And do these haunt thee for thy mother's blood?

ORES. Ah wretched me, how dreadful their pursuit!

MEN. Thus dreadful sufferings dreadful deeds attend.

ORES. Yet have we where to charge our miseries.

MEN. Name not thy father's death; that were unwise.

ORES. Phœbus, by whose command I slew my mother.

MEN. Of right and justice ignorant, I ween.

ORES. We to the gods submit, whate'er they are.

MEN. And doth not Phœbus in thine ills protect thee?

ORES. Not yet: delays attend the powers divine.

MEN. How long then since thy mother breathed her last?

ORES. This the sixth day; the funeral pile yet warm.

MEN. How soon thy mother's blood these powers avenge?

ORES. Unwisely said: though true, unkind to friends.

MEN. What then avails to have avenged thy father?

ORES. Nought yet. Delay is as a deed not done.

MEN. In what light does the city view thy deeds?

ORES. They hate us, so that none hold conference with us.

MEN. Hast thou yet purified thy hands from blood?

ORES. Where'er I go, each house is barred against me.

MEN. What citizens thus drive thee from the land?

ORES. Ceax, through ranc'rous malice to my father.

MEN. On the avenging Palamedes' death?

ORES. I wrought it not. But three pursue my ruin.

MEN. The others who? Some of Ægisthus' friends?

ORES. They hurt me most, whose power now sways the state.

MEN. Commit they not the sceptre to thy hands?

ORES. They, who no longer suffer us to live!

MEN. How acting? What thou art assured of speak.

ORES. Sentence against us will this day be given.

MEN. Of exile? or to die? or not to die?

ORES. To die, with stones crushed by our citizens.

MEN. Why fliest thou not far from this country's bounds?

ORES. On every side we are enclosed with arms.

MEN. By private foes, or by the Argive state?

ORES. By the whole state: in brief, that I may die.

MEN. Wretch, thou hast reached misfortune's dire extreme.

ORES. In thee is all my hope, in thee my refuge:

Happy to us afflicted art thou come;

Share with thy friends that happiness, alone

Enjoy not all the good thou hast received;

In our afflictions bear a friendly part.

Think how my father loved thee, and requite

That love to us: it will become thee well:

They have the name of friends, but not the worth,

Who are not friends in our calamities.

CHOR. But see, the Spartan Tyndarus this way

Directs his aged feet, in sable weeds,

His locks, in grief for his dead daughter, shorn.

ORES. Ah me! He comes indeed, whose presence most  
Fills me with shame for what I have misdone.

I was his darling once; my infant age

With tenderness he nursed, caressed me, bore

The child of Agamemnon in his arms,

And loved me like the twin-born sons of Jove:

Nor Leda less. And is it thus, my soul,

Thus, O my bleeding heart, that I requite

Their ill-paid love! Ah, cover me, ye shades,

Ye clouds, with friendly darkness wrap me round,

And hide me from the terrors of his eye!

TYNDARUS, MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

TYND. Where shall I see my daughter's husband, where  
Find Menelaus? At Clytemnestra's tomb,

Libations as I poured, I heard that he,

With Helen, after all these tedious years,

Is safely in the Nauplian port arrived.

O lead me; for I long to grasp his hand,

To feast mine eyes after this length of years,

And welcome to our shores the man I love.

MEN. Hail, reverend sharer of the bed with Jove !

TYND. With joy thy greeting I return, my son.

Ah, not to know the future, what an ill !

Hateful to me this murd'rous dragon here

Glares pestilential lightnings from his eyes.

Wilt thou hold conference with th' unhallowed wretch ?

MEN. And wherefore not ? His father was my friend.

TYND. From such a father sprung a son so vile ?

MEN. He did ; to be respected, though unhappy.

TYND. Barb'rous thy manners, 'mongst barbarians learned.

MEN. Nay, Greece enjoins respect to kindred blood.

TYND. And not to wish to be above the laws.

MEN. Necessity is to the wise a law.

TYND. Enjoy it thou ; I will have none of it.

MEN. Wisdom approves not anger in thy years.

TYND. What ! Is the contest then of wisdom with him ?

If virtuous and dishonourable deeds

Are plain to all, who more unwise than he ?

Deaf to the call of justice he infringed

The firm authority of the public laws :

For when beneath my daughter's murd'ring axe

Th' imperial Agamemnon bowed his head,

A horrid deed, which never shall I praise,

He ought t' have called the laws, the righteous laws,

T' avenge the blood, and by appeal to them

Have driven his mother from this royal house :

Thus 'midst his ills calm reason had borne rule,

Justice had held its course, and he been righteous.

But the same Fury, which had seized his mother,

Had now seized him ; and with ungoverned rage,

Justly abhorrent of her impious deed,

He did a deed more impious, slew his mother.

For, let me ask thee, should the faithless wife

Bathe in the husband's blood her murd'rous hands,

And should th' avenging son the mother slay,

His son again retaliate blood for blood,

What bound shall the progressive mischief know ?

The wisdom of our ancestors ordained

That he, who had the guilt of blood upon him,

Be not allowed the sight, the walks of men,  
By banishment atoning, not by death :  
Else one must always be to death devote,  
Who hath the last pollution on his hands.  
But these vile women doth my soul abhor,  
And her, my daughter, first, who slew her lord :  
Thy Helen too I never will commend,  
Never hold converse with her ; no, nor thee  
Can I approve, who for a worthless woman  
In toilsome march hast trod the fields of Troy.  
Yet to my power will I support the laws,  
And check this savage, blood-polluted rage,  
Which spreads wild havoc o'er th' unpeopled land.  
Hadst thou the feelings of humanity,  
Wretch, when thy mother cried to thee for mercy,  
And bared her breast to thy relentless view ?  
I saw it not, that scene of misery,  
Yet the soft tear melts from my aged eye.  
One thing confirms my words : the gods abhor,  
With madness scourge thee, and with terrors haunt,  
Vindictive of thy guilt. What need I hear  
From other witness what mine eyes behold ?  
Now, Menelaus, I warn thee, mark me well :  
Do not, protecting him, oppose the gods,  
But leave him to the vengeance of the state,  
Or never set thy foot on Sparta's shore.  
My daughter by her death hath rightly paid  
The debt to justice : but from him that death  
Was most unjust. Oh, happy had I been,  
Had I no daughters : there I am a wretch !

CHOR. Happy his state, who, in his children blest,  
Hath not there felt affliction's deepest wound.

ORES. In reverence to thy age I dread to speak  
What I well know must pierce thy heart with grief.  
I am unholy in my mother's death,  
But holy, as my father I avenged.  
The veneration due to those grey hairs  
Strikes me with awe : else I could urge my plea  
Freely and boldly : but thy years dismay me.

What could I do? Let fact be weighed with fact.  
 My father was the author of my being ;  
 Thy daughter brought me forth : he gave me life,  
 Which she but fostered : to the higher cause  
 A higher reverence then I deemed was due.  
 Thy daughter, for I dare not call her mother,  
 Forsook her royal bed for a rank sty  
 Of secret and adulterous lust : on me  
 The word reflects disgrace, yet I must speak it.  
 Ægisthus was this private paramour :  
 Him first I slew, then sacrificed my mother :  
 An impious deed ; but I avenged my father.  
 Thou threatenst the just vengeance of the state :  
 Hear me : deserve I not the thanks of Greece ?  
 Should wives with ruffian boldness kill their husbands,  
 Then fly for refuge to their sons, and think,  
 Baring their breast, to captivate their pity,  
 These deeds would pass for nothing, as the mood,  
 For something or for nothing, shall incline them.  
 This complot have I broke, by doing what  
 Thy pompous language styles atrocious deeds.  
 My soul abhorred my mother, and I slew her,  
 Who, when her lord was absent, and in arms  
 To glorious conquest led the sons of Greece,  
 Betrayed him, with pollution stained his bed ;  
 And, conscious of her guilt, sought not t' atone it,  
 But, to escape his righteous vengeance, poured  
 Destruction on his head, and killed my father.  
 Now by the gods, though in a charge of blood  
 Ill it becomes me to invoke the gods,  
 Had I in silence tamely borne her deeds,  
 Would not the murdered, justly hating me,  
 Have roused the Furies to torment my soul ?  
 Or hath she only her assisting fiends,  
 And he no fav'ring power t' avenge his wrongs ?  
 Thou, when to that bad daughter thou gavst birth,  
 Didst give me ruin ; for through her bold crime  
 I lost my father, and my mother slew.  
 Seest thou Ulysses' wife ? Telemachus

Shed not her blood ; for she, unstained with vice,  
 Guards her chaste bed with spotless sanctity.  
 Seest thou Apollo, who to mortal ears  
 Sounds from his central cave the voice of truth ?  
 Him we obey in all that he commands :  
 Obeying his commands, I slew my mother ;  
 Drag him then to your bar, put him to death ;  
 The guilt is his, not mine. What should I do ?  
 The guilt on him transferred, is not the god  
 Sufficient to absolve me ? Where shall man  
 Find refuge, if the god, at whose command  
 I did it, will not now save me from death ?  
 Then say not that these deeds were done not well,  
 But to the doers most unhappily.  
 If well accorded, the connubial state  
 From all its strings speaks perfect harmony ;  
 If ill, at home, abroad, the harsh notes jar,  
 And with rude discord wound the ear of Peace.

CHOR. That Peace to wound always our sex was born,  
 Augmenting by our ills the ills of men.

TYND. What, dost thou brave me, and in proud defiance  
 So answer, as to pierce my heart with grief ?  
 This pride will fire me more to urge thy death.  
 One honest task I'll add to that which drew me  
 Hither, to grace my murdered daughter's tomb :  
 This instant to th' assembled Argives go,  
 And rouse the willing state, an easy task,  
 To crush thee, and thy sister : she deserves,  
 E'en more than thou, to die, whose accursed tongue  
 Added new fierceness to thy fierce intents,  
 Thine ears assailing with some bitter speech,  
 That Agamemnon's shade haunted her dreams,  
 That the tremendous powers below abhorred  
 Th' adulterous bed, foul e'en to man's gross sense,  
 Till all this house blazed in the flames she kindled.  
 I tell thee, Menelaus, and I will do it,  
 If thou regard my hate, or my alliance,  
 Protect him not, by the just gods I charge thee,  
 But leave him to the rigour of the laws,



Or never dare to tread on Spartan ground.  
Hear me, and mark me : league not with the vile,  
Nor scorn thy friends, whose breasts with virtue glow.  
Here, my attendants, lead me from this house.

ORESTES, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

ORES. Why get thee gone, that I may plead to him,  
Uninterrupted by thy wayward age.—

Why dost thou bend that way, then backward turn,  
Thoughtful thy step, absorbed in anxious care ?

MEN. Forbear, and leave me to my thoughts, perplexed  
And unresolved which cause I should espouse.

ORES. Suspend awhile thy judgment ; hear me first,  
First hear my plea ; weigh it, and then resolve.

MEN. Speak ; thou hast reason. Wisdom sometimes loves  
To dwell with silence, sometimes woos the ear.

ORES. Then let me urge my plea ; and, oh ! forgive me  
If I seem tedious : grief is fond of words.

Give me not aught of thine, only return  
What from my father's grace thou hast received.

I ask not thy rich treasures, yet a treasure  
Richer than all thy stores : I ask my life.

Is this unjust ? Let me from thee receive  
Something unjust : such Agamemnon was,

Who led to Troy th' united arms of Greece :  
Yet was the wrong not his ; but to avenge

Thy wife's incontinent and foul offence.

For all his dangers, all his toils in war,

Borne as becomes a friend, in a friend's cause,

Give me one day for his ten years in arms :

To vindicate thy honour, one short day

Stand firm, my friend, the guardian of my life.

For thee at Aulis my poor sister died ;

I am content, nor ask Hermione

A sacrifice for me. In my distress

Protect me, pity me ; I ask no more.

To my unhappy father grant my life,

And save my sister, save her virgin years.

The house of Agamemnon sinks with me.  
 Impossible thou'lt say : "When danger threatens,  
 The friend comes forth resolved, and shields his friend :  
 In fortune's golden smiles what need of friends ?  
 Her fav'ring power wants no auxiliary.  
 Greece sees thou lovst thy wife." I speak not this  
 In flattery, to wind into thy bosom ;  
 But I conjure thee by that love—Ah me !  
 How am I fall'n ! Not for myself alone  
 I pour my prayer, but for my father's house.  
 Now by the kindred blood, whose royal tide  
 Rolls in thy veins ; by each endearing tie  
 Of fond relation and fraternal love,  
 Think that my murdered father's injured shade  
 Burst from the realms of death, and hovers o'er thee ;  
 And think, oh, think the words I speak are his.  
 'Tis for my life I plead, life's dear to all,  
 With sighs, with groans, with tears : save me, oh, save me !

CHOR. Low at thy knees a woman joins her prayer ;  
 Oh, save them, save th' unhappy, for thou canst !

MEN. I hold thee dear, Orestes, and am willing  
 To give my friendly aid in thy distress ;  
 Th' affinity of blood calls loudly on us  
 To share its toils, if the gods grant the power,  
 Nor shrink appalled at danger or at death ;  
 And much I wish the gods would grant this power :  
 But with a thousand toils oppressed I come,  
 And lift a single spear, whose glitt'ring point  
 No squadrons follow wedged in firm array ;  
 Few my remaining friends, and small my force.  
 With Argos then should we engage in arms,  
 We could not conquer ; but with gentle words  
 Perchance we may : this way Hope smiles on us.  
 Who would with feeble forces aim at deeds  
 Of perilous proof ? 'Twere folly to attempt it.  
 When roused to rage the madd'ning populace storms,  
 Their fury, like a rolling flame, bursts forth  
 Unquenchable ; but give its violence way,  
 It spends itself, and as its force abates

Learns to obey, and yields it to your will :  
 Their passions varying thus, now rough with rage,  
 Now melting with soft pity, Wisdom marks  
 The change, and turns it to a rich account.  
 Thus Tyndarus I will move, and th' Argive state,  
 To use their supreme power with gentleness.  
 The gailant bark, that too much swells her sails,  
 Oft is o'erset, but let her pride be lowered,  
 She rides secure, and glories in the gale.  
 Impetuous rage is hateful to the gods,  
 Hateful to men : with cool unpassioned reason  
 (Discretion guides my words) I must preserve thee,  
 And not, as thou perchance mayst deem, by force ,  
 Against the stronger what can force avail ?  
 Its trophies can my single spear erect  
 Victorious o'er the ills that now assault thee ?  
 To be a suitor hath not been my use  
 At Argos, but Necessity will teach us,  
 If wise, submission to the power of Fortune.

ORESTES, CHORUS.

ORES. Thou doughty champion of thy wife, good else  
 For nought, in thy friend's cause a coward base,  
 Thus dost thou slight me, turn thee thus away ?  
 Are Agamemnon's favours thus repaid ?  
 Thou hadst no friend, my father, in thy ills.  
 Ah me ! I am betrayed ; e'en Hope forsakes me,  
 And leaves me unprotected to my fate,  
 Who on his shelt'ring power alone relied.—  
 But from his Phocians, see, with hasty step  
 Here comes a friend indeed, my Pylades !  
 A pleasing sight : for in distress a friend  
 Comes like a calm to the tossed mariner.

PYLADES, ORESTES, CHORUS.

PYL. With swift pace speed I through the city, hearing  
 Their counsels, and discerning their intents  
 T' adjudge thee and thy sister to quick death.

But what ! How fares my friend ? What thy design ?  
Thou partner of my soul, companion dear,  
Friend, kinsman, brother : thou art all to me.

ORES. To speak my woes in brief then, we are lost.

PYL. Then in thy ruin is thy friend involved.

ORES. The Spartan views us with malignant eye.

PYL. A vile wife to a husband matched as vile.

ORES. To me no joy doth his arrival bring.

PYL. Is he indeed then at this land arrived ?

ORES. Late, but soon found unfaithful to his friends.

PYL. And brought he his disloyal wife with him ?

ORES. In truth he brought not her, but she brought him.

PYL. Where is this pest, that hath unpeopled Greece ?

ORES. Here in my house, if I may call it mine.

PYL. What to thy father's brother didst thou say ?

ORES. Not to see me and my poor sister slain.

PYL. Now, by the gods, what answer did he give ?

ORES. Timid and cautious, like a faithless friend.

PYL. With what excuses his denial clogged ?

ORES. The father of these female worthies came.

PYL. Incensed and chafing for his daughter's death ?

ORES. E'en so ; for him my father was disdained.

PYL. And wants he courage here t' assert thy cause ?

ORES. No warrior he, but among women brave.

PYL. Then have thy woes their full weight ; thou must die.

ORES. First the deciding vote must pass against us.

PYL. Deciding what ? I tremble as I ask.

ORES. Or life or death. Few words speak great events.

PYL. Fly then, and with thy sister leave this house.

ORES. Seest thou the guards that close their weapons round ?

PYL. Each street I saw, each pass secured with arms.

ORES. We are invested, like a sea-girt town.

PYL. Mine also is misfortune, ruin mine.

ORES. Ruin ! From whence ? Thy ills augment my woes.

PYL. My father in his rage hath banished me.

ORES. What, on some public, or a private charge ?

PYL. As impious, aiding in thy mother's death.

ORES. Unhappy, shalt thou suffer in my ills ?

**PYL. I shall not, like the Spartan, shrink from them**

ORES. Like mine, should Argos meditate thy death !

PYL. They have no right ; I am no subject here.

ORES. The many, when bad rulers prompt to ill,  
Regard no rights.

PYL. But when good lead to good,  
Their counsels well advised breathe temperate wisdom.

ORES. Well, be it so. But shall we now consult  
Our common good ?

PYL. Propose th' important theme.

ORES. To urge my plea before them.

PYL. Vindicate  
Thy deed as righteous ?

ORES. Righteous, as avenging  
My father's blood.

PYL. Harshly, I fear, their brows  
Will frown upon thee.

ORES. Should fear hold me mute,  
And yield me tame to death ?

PYL. Unmanly that.

ORES. What should I do ?

PYL. Hast thou, remaining here,  
Prospect of safety ?

ORES. Safety dwells not here.

PYL. In going hast thou hope ?

ORES. Should it take well,  
It might succeed.

PYL. Attempt it boldly then ;  
Go : if to die, 'tis nobler to die there.

ORES. My cause is just.

PYL. Would heaven they so may think !

ORES. Thus I avoid the charge of guilty fear.  
Some one, indignant at my father's death,  
Perchance may pity me.

PYL. I see it all,  
And the bright lustre thy high birth throws round thee.

ORES. I will not stay, and like a coward slave  
Die tamely here.

PYL. I praise thy noble spirit.

ORES. But to my sister shall we make this known ?

PYL. No, I conjure thee.

ORES. She would be all tears.

PYL. Avoid the omen then ; in silence go ;  
Nor let her grief unseasonably detain thee.

ORES. Yet one distress afflicts me : should the Furies  
Rouse all their terrors, and affright my soul.

PYL. My care shall watch around thee.

ORES. To attend  
A man disordered thus, to guard, to hold him,  
Is an unpleasing office.

PYL. But for thee  
Delightful to my love.

ORES. Yet have a care  
Lest my contagious frenzy seize on thee.

PYL. No more of frenzy.

ORES. Wilt thou not be shocked  
At this hard task ?

PYL. No office shocks a friend.

ORES. Be thou my pilot then.

PYL. A welcome charge.

ORES. And guide my footsteps to my father's tomb,  
That I may pour my supplications there,  
And move his shade to aid me.

PYL. Pious this,  
And just.

ORES. But from my mother's lead me far :  
Let me not see it.

PYL. All is hostile there.  
But haste thee, ere the fatal vote be passed.  
Lean on me, let me throw my arm around thee,  
Thus hold thee, thus support thy feeble limbs,  
And bear thee through the crowd of gazing eyes  
Regardless. Where shall friendship show its faith,  
If now in thy afflictions I forsake thee ?

ORES. This is to have a friend : compared to this  
What are the ties of blood ? The man who melts  
With social sympathy, though not allied,  
Is than a thousand kinsmen of more worth.

CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

Th' exalted state, th' imperial power,  
Which spread o'er Greece its ample sway,  
And, girt with war, on the barbaric shore  
Taught the proud streams of Simois to obey,  
Withdraw their glories. Discord (as of old  
Fierce 'midst the sons of Tantalus she rose,  
And for the rich ram fleeced with gold  
Prepared the feast of horrid woes,  
Whence Vengeance bared the flaming sword,  
And blood for blood remorseless poured)  
Now through the house of Atreus lords it wide,  
And filled with carnage swells her sanguine pride.

*Antistrophe.*

Honour is honour now no more,  
Since with fierce rage he dared invade  
His parent's breast, and, his hand stained with gore,  
Waved to the golden sun his crimson blade.  
Ill actions are displeasing to the skies,  
And moon-eyed Folly marks them for her own.  
Heardst thou not Clytemnestra's cries,  
Her thrilling shrieks, her dying moan?  
"The mother by the son to bleed!  
Ah, dare not: 'tis an impious deed:  
Nor, in wild rev'rence to thy father's name,  
Blot with eternal infamy thy fame!"

*Epode.*

Is there in all heaven's angry store  
Misfortune, sorrow, sickness, pain,  
Is there an ill that racks, that tortures more  
Than by th' un pitying son the parent slain?

Ah spare, unhappy youth, thy mother spare!—  
 'Tis done : like vultures see the Furies rise,  
 And rend his soul with wild despair :  
 See how he rolls his haggard eyes !  
 When from her gold-embroidered vest  
 Suppliant she bared her heaving breast,  
 Ah, couldst thou strike ?—He struck.—O deed abhorred !  
 And ruthless in her bosom plunged the sword.

## ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. Ye virgins, hath the poor Orestes, struck  
 With madness from the gods, rushed from the house ?

CHOR. Not so ; but to th' assembled state of Argos  
 He goes, resolved to strive in this hard contest,  
 Where life to him and thee, or death's the prize.

ELEC. Ah me, what hath he done ? Who counselled this ?

CHOR. Pylades. But this messenger will tell thee  
 All that hath passed touching thy brother there.

## MESSENGER, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

MESS. Unhappy daughter of that mighty chief,  
 Who led the powers of Greece, revered Electra,  
 How shall my tongue disclose this tale of woe ?

ELEC. Ah me ! We are no more. Thy falt'ring voice  
 In broken accents speaks the tragic tale.

MESS. E'en so : the fatal sentence is pronounced.  
 This day thy brother and thyself must die.

ELEC. Long have my fears, presaging this event,  
 With mournful expectation sunk my heart.  
 But was there no debate ? Whose ruling voice  
 Procured this sentence ? Tell me, good old man,  
 Arin they their hands with stones ? Or by the sword  
 Together sink we in one common death ?

MESS. I left my rural cottage, and the gates  
 Of Argos entered, with fond wish to learn  
 To thee and to Orestes what had chanced,  
 Prompted by that high reverence which I bore



Thy father ; for his house supported me,  
 Though poor, yet not unfaithful. Soon I saw  
 The thronging people hurry to that height  
 Where, as they say, Ægyptus gave them seats  
 When Danaus was adjudged to punishment.  
 Astonished at the sight, I asked if war  
 New threat'ning roused the city thus : an Argive  
 Gave answer, " Seest thou not Orestes there ?  
 He goes to plead his cause ; and life or death  
 Hangs on his voice." I looked, and near me saw—  
 O piteous spectacle !—what least I hoped  
 To see, thy brother : as he walked, his eyes  
 Fixed on the ground, his fever-weakened limbs,  
 Supported by his friend, whose faithful care,  
 Touched with like grief, guided his feeble steps.  
 Soon as th' assembly sate, the herald's voice  
 Proclaimed free speech to all who willed to speak,  
 Whether Orestes for his mother slain  
 Should die, or not. Talthybius first arose,  
 Who with thy father stormed the towers of Troy ;  
 Double and dark his speech, as one who lives  
 The slave of greatness : to thy father high  
 Respect he paid, but to thy brother's praise  
 Silent, in honourable terms involved  
 His ill intent, as that he modelled laws  
 'Gainst parents not beseeming : but his eye  
 Always glanced cheerful on Ægisthus' friends :  
 For such their nature ; the warm shine of fortune  
 Allures them, vassals to the rich and great.  
 Next rose the royal Diomede : his voice  
 Allowed not death, but exile. to atone  
 The deed. Discordant clamours echoed round,  
 As approbation prompted or dislike.  
 An Argive, not an Argive, next arose,  
 His birth barbaric, of licentious tongue,  
 Presumptuous, turbulent, and prompt to lead  
 With empty noise the populace to ill :  
 For the smooth tongue, that charms to mischief, bears  
 A pestilent power ; whilst Wisdom, aiming still

At virtue, brings its honourable thought,  
 Though late, to glorious issue. Her grave voice  
 Authority, that owes its best grace to it,  
 Should countenance, and check the factious tongue.  
 This wretch, suborned by Tyndarus, clamoured loud  
 For death, the hardest death, involving thee  
 In the same ruin. But another rose  
 Of different sentiment ; no slightly gaud,  
 But one in whose plain form the eye might note  
 A manly, free, direct integrity,  
 Tempered with prudence ; one who rarely joined  
 The city circles, in his small domain,  
 Which his own cultivating hand had taught to smile.  
 Passing in honest peace his blameless days.  
 His voice to Agamemnon's son decreed  
 A crown, his noble father who avenged  
 By slaying that abandoned impious woman,  
 Whose vile deeds checked the soldier's generous flame ;  
 For who in distant fields, at honour's call,  
 Would wield his martial arms, if in his absence  
 Pollution stain his wife, and his pure bed  
 Be made a foul sty of adulterous lust ?  
 The virtuous all approved. Orestes now,  
 Preventing further argument, advanced,  
 And thus addressed them : " Ye illustrious Argives,  
 Who from a line of ancient heroes draw  
 Your high-born race, to vindicate your honour,  
 Not less than to avenge my father's death,  
 I did this deed ! For should the husband's blood  
 Leave on the wife's hand no foul stain, full soon  
 The purple tide would flow, or you must sink—  
 O shame to manhood !—vile slaves to your wives.  
 Now she, that to my father's bed was false,  
 Hath died for it. If you require my life,  
 The law hath lost its force ; and who shall say  
 His own life is secure, as these bold deeds  
 From frequency draw force and mock at justice ?"  
 These truths were lost in air ; and that vile talker,  
 Whose malice called for death to both, prevailed.

Harsh was the sentence, and th' unhappy youth  
 Scarce gained this sad indulgence, leave to die  
 By his own hand this day. Thou too must die.  
 Him from th' assembly Pylades with tears  
 Leads this way, by a few, a faithful few,  
 Accompanied, whose eyes, melting with pity,  
 Rain bitter dew. He comes, a dismal sight,  
 To pierce thy soul with grief. But haste, prepare  
 The sword: thou too must die: thy high-born race  
 Avails not, nor the Oracle of Phœbus,  
 Whose fatal answer brings destruction on you.

CHOR. Why, miserable virgin, dost thou bend  
 Thy clouded eye to tin' earth? Why silent thus?  
 Give thy griefs voice, and let thy sorrows flow.

ELECTRA.

*Strophe.*

Yes, I will let my sorrows flow,  
 And give to grief the melancholy strain,  
 And, as the mournful notes complain  
 With all the heart-felt agony of woe,  
 These hands my bleeding cheeks shall tear,  
 And beat this head in wild despair,  
 Devoted to the queen, that rules beneath  
 The realms of darkness and of death.  
 Daughters of Argos, with loud shrieks deplore  
 The house of Atreus, now no more.  
 Fall'n, by too severe a fate,  
 From the proud glories of its splendid state.

*Antistrophe.*

Low, low they lie, th' imperial line,  
 Th' imperial race of Pelops vanished, gone;  
 No trace remains, no name, no son;  
 Their vaunted honours in the dust decline.

From envious gods these ruins come,  
 And the harsh city's bloody doom.  
 Short is the day of life, each little hour  
 With toils, with mis'ries clouded o'er ;  
 Should bright'ning hope, to cheer the troubled day,  
 Pour through the gloom a transient ray,  
 Fate comes, and o'er the darkened scene  
 Spreads the deep horrors of its dreary reign.

*Epode.*

Oh for an eagle's wing, whose rapid flight  
 Might bear me to th' ethereal height,  
 Where to Olympus fixed the golden chain  
 Suspends the pond'rous, trembling mass :  
 There should my woe-wild notes complain  
 To the hoar author of my race.  
 From Tantalus our lineage springs,  
 A mighty race of sceptred kings :  
 Great as they are, around them wait  
 The vengeful ministers of fate ;  
 Since Pelops, with impetuous force,  
 Lashed his proud steeds, and urged their fiery course ;  
 And as the bounding wheels they bore  
 Along Geræstus' rock-rough shore,  
 Saw Myrtilus extended there,  
 Hurled headlong from the rapid car ;  
 With gloomy joy he smiled, and gave  
 The mangled limbs to stain the foaming wave.  
 To Atreus thence pernicious came  
 From Maia's son the fatal Ram,  
 Who gave his golden fleece to shine  
 Destructive, a destructive sign.  
 Hence, Discord, hence thy horrid deeds  
 Startled the sun's indignant steeds ;  
 Back to the East they wing their way,  
 And meet the Morn's affrighted ray ;  
 The Pleiads, hast'ning to advance,  
 Start back, and change their sevenfold dance.

Hence false Aërope in honeyed smiles  
Concealed her wanton, ruinous wiles ;  
Hence to Thyestes' horrid feast  
Came slaughter, a tremendous guest ;  
And, her hand reeking with my father's blood,  
Draws from my heart the purple flood.

CHOR. But see thy brother, by the Argive state  
Condemned to bleed, advances slow ; and with him  
The faithful Pylades, with a brother's love,  
Shares in his griefs, and guides his feeble steps.

ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

ELEC. Ah me, my brother ! Whilst I yet behold thee  
Let me indulge my grief, ere yet the tomb,  
Yet ere the solemn pyre in its black shade  
Wraps our dead limbs. let me indulge my grief,  
My frenetic grief ; fix my fond eyes upon thee,  
That never, never must behold thee more.

ORES. Wilt thou not cease these womanish wailings, meet  
This harsh decree with silence, and abide,  
Firmly abide the rigour of our fate ?

ELEC. Can I be silent, when our eyes no more  
Shall see yon golden sun's irradiate light ?

ORES. Kill me not thou ; forbear ! Enough of death  
Have I already from the hands of Argos.

ELEC. Thy youth I mourn, and thy untimely death ;  
Life was thy due, when, ah ! thou art no more.

ORES. Now by the gods, throw not this softness round me,  
Nor make th' unmanly tear drop at our woes.

ELEC. We die ; and shall the tear not flow ? That dew  
Pity will shed o'er the lost joys of life.

ORES. This day must we needs die ; prepare we then  
The sword, or other instrument of death.

ELEC. My brother, do thou kill me ; let no Argive  
Touch with his rude hand Agamemnon's daughter.

ORES. No : in thy mother's blood I have enough ;  
I shed not thine ; but by thy own hand die.

ELEC. I will ; and not desert thy honest sword.  
But let me throw my fond arms round thy neck.

ORES. Vain is the joy, if yet it be a joy,  
In death to soothe thee with a last embrace.

ELEC. My brother ! O that dearest, best-loved name,  
Dear to thy sister, partner of my soul !

ORES. Why wilt thou melt me thus ? And yet I wish,  
Returning thy embrace, to fold thee close,  
Close in my arms ; nor modesty forbids ;  
It is my sister. Let me clasp thee then,  
And press thee to my bosom, fondly press thee.  
This sweet exchange of love is all our woes  
Allow us for the names of wedded joys.

ELEC. Oh, may the same sword end us, the same tomb  
Close in its cedar hearsement our cold limbs !

ORES. That would be joy ; but destitute of friends  
Who shall inurn us in one common tomb ?

ELEC. Did Menelaus my father then betray ?  
Did not the wretch plead earnest for thy life ?

ORES. He durst not show his false eye , but, his hopes  
Fixed on the sceptre, feared to save his friends.  
But let us in our death give shining proof  
Of our illustrious birth ; my hand shall show  
My high nobility, and plunge the sword  
Intrepid through my breast : dare thou the like.  
Thou, Pylades, be umpire of our death ;  
With decent care compose our breathless limbs,  
And lay them in my father's sepulchre.  
Farewell ! I go to execute the deed.

PYL. Yet say ; one charge against thee must I bring,  
Shouldst thou but hope I would survive thy death.

ORES. And what avails it that thou die with me ?

PYL. Without thy converse what can life avail ?

ORES. Thou hast not slain thy mother : I slew mine.

PYL. I shared the deed : the suffering I should share.

ORES. Oh, save thee for thy father ; die not with me :  
Thou hast a country ; that name's lost to me :  
Thou hast a father's house, hast greatness, wealth.  
If this ill-fated maid, whom to thy arms,

The sanction of our friendship, I betrothed—  
If she be lost, some other nuptial bed  
Awaits to bless thee with a father's joys.  
Our dear relation is no more: my friend,  
Thou, whose sweet converse was my soul's delight,  
Farewell! For thee the joys of life remain;  
To us they wither in the shade of death.

PYL. Wide from my honest purpose dost thou stray.  
May not the fertile earth, nor the bright air  
Receive my blood, if ever I forsake thee,  
To spare myself if ever I forsake thee.  
Together I designed, together wrought  
Thy mother's death, which draws this fate on thee:  
Together will I die with thee, and her:  
Dear to my soul, affianced to my bed,  
I deem her as my wife. Should I return  
To Delphi, the high citadel of Phocis,  
Dare I name honour, if united thus  
Whilst fortune favoured your high state, but now  
The false friend shrink from your adversity?  
Not so: these things demand my deep regard.  
Yet, ere we die, some measures let us form  
T' afflict with grief the heart of Menelaus.

ORES. Let me see that, my friend, then let me die!

PYL. Be then advised, and let the keen sword wait.

ORES. Shall then my just revenge burst on his head?

PYL. No more: these women; I distrust their faith.

ORES. They are all truth, all friendship; fear them not.

PYL. Let us slay Helen: that would grieve his soul.

ORES. How? I approve it, be it nobly done.

PYL. Let the sword end her: in thy house she lurks.

ORES. She doth, and seals its treasures for her own.

PYL. Espoused to Pluto she will seal no more.

ORES. But how, around her that barbaric train?

PYL. What are they? For the Phrygians nought I dread.

ORES. Marshals of mirrors and cosmetic washes.

PYL. Brings she these Trojan gewgaws back to Greece?

ORES. Greece! 'Tis a paltry spot; she breathes not in it.

PYL. Well may the free disdain a host of slaves.

ORES. T' achieve this deed, twice would I die with joy.

PYL. Twice would I die, might I thy vengeance aid.

ORES. Disclose thy purpose, and accomplish it.

PYL. We enter, as in readiness to die.

ORES. Thus far I comprehend thee, but no more.

PYL. To her with loud laments bewail our fate.

ORES. T' extort the tear, though her heart bounds with joy.

PYL. This be her hour: the next may we enjoy.

ORES. How then to execute the destined deed?

PYL. Bear we our swords concealed beneath our vests.

ORES. But can destruction reach her 'midst her train?

PYL. Confined apart nought shall that crew avail.

ORES. And if one dares to clamour, let him die.

PYL. In that th' immediate exigence will guide us.

ORES. The death of Helen then, that is the word.

PYL. Agreed. That honour dictates this, now hear.

To draw the sword against a virtuous woman

Would blot our names with infamy. Her blood

All Greece demands, for sons, for fathers slain

In her cursed cause, for the deep sigh that rends

The widowed matron's desolated heart.

Shouts of applause would rend the air, thick fires

Blaze to the gods, and many a fervent prayer

Draw blessings on our heads. No longer called

The murderer of thy mother, thou shalt hear

Th' applauding voice of Greece with triumph hail thee

Revenger of the mischief-working Helen.

What, shall the treacherous Menelaus then smile,

Proud of his high success; and, whilst thy father,

Thyself, thy sister fall, thy mother too,

(But I forbear; for honour at her name

Dims its pale fires,) seize thy rich-treasured house

As his inheritance, and in amorous folds

Clasp his fair wife, by Agamemnon's spear

Recovered to his arms? Let me not live,

If I not draw the gloomy sword against her.

Failing in this, we'll set the house on flames,

And nobly in the blazing ruins die.



One must succeed : the glory shall be ours  
To die with honour, or with honour live.

CHOR. This guilty fair, a scandal to her sex,  
Merits th' abhorrence of each virtuous dame.

ORES. Life hath no blessing like a prudent friend,  
Than treasured wealth more precious, than the power  
Of monarchs, and the people's loud applause.  
Thou on Ægisthus guidedst my just rage,  
Nor in my dangers wast thou absent : now  
Thou givst me vengeance on mine enemies,  
Nor shrinks thy firm foot back. But I forbear,  
Nor with intemperate praise thine ear offend.  
I will not tamely die, but in my fall  
Pull ruin on my foes : they too shall weep,  
The traitors ; they shall have their share of woe.  
Th' illustrious Agamemnon was my sire,  
Imperial chief of Greece ; no tyrant he,  
But clothed with th' awful power of the just gods.  
I will not blot his splendours, like a slave  
Crouching to death ; but with a liberal pride  
Throw life away, first glorying in revenge.  
Whiche'er succeeds, we triumph : yet if thence  
Despair force safety, if the sword should glance  
From us and wound their breasts, I have my wish.  
Transport is in the thought, and the light words,  
Charged with no costly pleasure, soothe my soul.

ELEC. And this suggests a thought which lifts my mind  
To hope success and safety to us all.

ORES. The prescience of a god inspires thy voice.  
But how ? Oh say, for wisdom too is thine.

ELEC. Then hear ; and thou, my brother, mark my words.

ORES. Speak : there is pleasure in the hope of good.

ELEC. The daughter of this Helen dost thou know ?

ORES. The fair Hermione, our mother's charge ?

ELEC. She now is gone to Clytemnestra's tomb.

ORES. With what intent ? Thy words awaken hope.

ELEC. To pour libations for her mother there.

ORES. As means of safety dost thou tell me this ?

ELEC. Her, when she enters, as an hostage seize.



Thy son, Orestes, calls thee ! At my prayers  
 Assistant come : for thee these sufferings fall  
 Unjustly on my head, for my just deeds.  
 Betrayed by thy base brother, 'gainst his wife  
 My stern intents are bent : aid our revenge.

ELEC. Father, if in the realms beneath thou hear  
 Thy children call, oh come ! For thee we die.

PYL. Spirit of Agamemnon, kindred shade,  
 Hear me too, hear thy suppliant : save thy children !

ORES. I slew my mother.

PYL. My hand touched the sword.

ELEC. And my bold counsels prompted to the deed.

ORES. T' avenge thee, father.

ELEC. Nor did I betray thee.

PYL. Hear this, indignant shade, and save thy children !

ORES. Accept th' oblation of these tears.

ELEC. Accept

These groans.

PYL. Now cease ; and haste we to the deed.

If to the realms beneath prayers wing their way,

He hears. Thou Jove, our great progenitor,

Awfully just, to him, to me, to her

Extend thy guardian power ; this trinal band

One cause, one safety, or one ruin joins :

We live together or together die.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. Virgins of high Pelasgian race,

Achaia's pride, Mycenæ's grace !

CHOR. Why, royal maid, these plaintive strains ?

That name, that title yet remains.

ELEC. Divide, divide ! With careful view

Watch you the street, the entrance you.

CHOR. And why to us this task assigned ?

Unfold, sweet friend, unfold thy mind.

ELEC. Lest any, standing near the gate,

Find in this scene of blood her fate.

1st SEMICHOR. Haste, to your stations quickly run :

My watch be towards the rising sun.

2nd SEMICHOR. Be mine with cautious care address  
To where he sinks him in the west.

ELEC. Now here, now there, now far, now nigh,  
Quick glancing dart th' observant eye.

1st SEMICHOR. With fond affection we obey,  
Our eyes quick glancing ev'ry way.

ELEC. Glance through that length of hair, which flows  
Light waving o'er your shaded brows.

1st SEMICHOR. This way a man comes hast'ning down ;  
His garb bespeaks some simple clown.

ELEC. Undone, undone, should he disclose  
These couched, armed lions to their foes.

1st SEMICHOR. He passes on, suppress thy fear,  
And all this way again is clear.

ELECTRA, to 2nd SEMICHORUS.

And that way doth no footstep rude  
Disturb the wished-for solitude ?

2nd SEMICHOR. This way no rude step beats the ground,  
But all is still, all safe around.

ELEC. Patience exhausted bears no more ;  
Near will I listen at the door.

Favoured with silence, why so slow  
To let the purple torrent flow ?

Blinded by beauty's dazzling ray

Do your charmed swords refuse t' obey ?

They hear not. Roused at these alarms

Some Argive soon will rush in arms ;

And in her aid vindictive spread

Horror and ruin on our head.

Watch, virgins, watch with strictest care,

Repose hath nothing to do here.

CHOR. With transverse watch our heedful eye  
Each various way ——

HEL. Io, Pelasgian Argos, I am slain !

[*Within.*

ELEC. Hark ! Their bold hands are in the bloody act.

It was the cry of Helena, I deem.

CHOR. O Jove, eternal power, hear us, and ever  
Protect our friends !

HEL. My dearest Menelaus,  
I die ! Where art thou ? Fly, oh fly to save me !

ELEC. Kill, slay, strike, wound, dispatch, destroy :  
With iron smiles of gloomy joy  
Plunge deep the huge tempestuous blade,  
For blood, for death, for carnage made,  
Deep in her breast. She basely fled  
Her father's house, her husband's bed :  
Hence many a Greek in battle slain  
Lies mould'ring on the Phrygian plain :  
Hence, to call forth the bursting tear,  
The arrowy shower, the hurtling spear,  
And hence Scamander's silver flood  
Whirls his swoln eddies stained with blood.

CHOR. Hark ! hark ! I hear the sound of feet :  
The marble pavement now they beat.

ELEC. Whilst slaughter is at work, my virgin friends,  
Hermione comes : cease we the measure then :  
She walks into our toils, a goodly prize.  
Silent resume your stations ; fixed your eye,  
Let not your countenance betray the deed.  
My eye shall take again its mournful cast,  
As unacquainted with this havoc here.

HERMIONE, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. From Clytemnestra's tomb comest thou, virgin  
Thy hallowed offerings and libations paid ?

HERM. I have appeased her shade. But from this house  
The voice of loud lament ere my approach  
Struck my astonished ear : it makes me tremble.

ELEC. Well it beseems us : we have cause for cries.

HERM. Be thy voice tuned to good. Is there aught new ?

ELEC. Orestes and myself are doomed to die.

HERM. Be it not so, by blood to me allied !

ELEC. Necessity lays its iron yoke on us.

HERM. For this did these laments sound from the house ?

ELEC. Suppliant at Helen's feet he raised the cry.

HERM. Who ? For my knowledge on thy words depends.

ELEC. The poor Orestes, for his life and mine.

HERM. Just cause for lamentation hath this house.

ELEC. Can nature know a stronger? But come thou,  
Join in the supplication of thy friends,  
Fall at thy mother's knees - how blest her state! -  
That Menelaus allow not that we die.

O thou, who from my mother's hand receiv'st  
Thy infant nurture, look with pity on us,  
Our woes alleviate, to the trial go:

My foot shall lead, sweet prop of all our hopes!

HERM. And willingly I follow: if my voice,  
My prayers, my power avail, ye shall not die.

ELEC. You there within the house, ye armed friends,  
Will you not seize your prey?

HERM. Ah, who are these  
Terrible to mine eye!

ORES. No noise, no cry! [Advancing  
To us, not to thyself, thou bringest safety.

ELEC. Here, seize her, seize her! To her trembling breast  
Point your keen swords, and awe her into silence.  
Let Menelaus perceive he hath found men,  
Not Phrygian slaves: men, whose bold spirits dare  
Retort his foul wrongs on his own base head. [They lead her off.  
Now, my loved virgins, raise your voices high;  
Before the house ring out the notes of woe,  
That this bold deed spread no alarm, nor call  
Th' astonished Argives to these royal gates,  
Till I see Helen rolling in her blood,  
Or from the slaves attending learn her fate.

CHOR. Justice unsheathed her awful sword,  
And Vengeance snatched it from her hand:  
From heaven her rapid flight she poured,  
And plunged in Helen's breast the glittering brand.  
For this accursed, this fatal fair  
Filled Greece with many a mournful tear,  
Since the pernicious Phrygian boy  
Enamoured bore her wanton charms to Troy.  
Hush, hush! the palace door resounds; break off.  
A Phrygian slave comes forth: learn we from him  
What fate hath wrought within.

PHRYGIAN, CHORUS.

PHRY. The Grecian sword from death I fled,  
 In these barbaric sandals was my flight,  
 Climbing the pillar's sculptured head,  
 And o'er the cedar rafter's height :  
 For th' unkind earth refused to save  
 A flying, a barbaric slave.  
 Whither, ah, whither shall I fly ?  
 Oh say, ye virgin strangers, say,  
 Mount the grey regions of the sky,  
 Or through the foaming billows dash my way,  
 Where, the firm globe encircling wide,  
 Vexed Ocean rolls his roaring tide ?

CHOR. Servant of Helen, Phrygian, whence these cries ?

PHRY. O Ilium, Ilium ! Woe, woe, woe !  
 Ye towers, the fertile Phrygia's stately boast !  
 O sacred Ida's pine-crowned brow !  
 I mourn, I mourn your glories lost :  
 For you these doleful notes complain,  
 A mournful, a barbaric strain.  
 From Leda's egg, the Swan her sire,  
 The beauteous, baleful Helen rose :  
 Whose eye on heaven-built Troy glares fire,  
 And the rich seat of Ganymede o'erthrows :  
 Hence flows, for chiefs, for heroes slain,  
 The mournful, the barbaric strain.

CHOR. No longer hold us in suspense ; relate  
 Each circumstance : conjecture errs from truth.

PHRY. It is the song of death : your pardon then  
 That I indulged the melancholy strain.  
 In Asia with barbaric voice we raise  
 These notes of woe, when by the ruthless sword  
 The blood of kings is shed upon the earth.  
 But to my tale. Of lion port came in  
 Two of your Grecians : father to the one  
 Th' illustrious leader of your troops : and one  
 The son of Strophius, of deep reserve,

And dang'rous, dark design ; such was the chief  
Of Ithaca, but faithful to his friends,  
In battle bold, and in the works of war  
Of sage experience ; as a dragon fierce.  
Perdition on his silence, which concealed  
Designs of death. Together they advanced  
To the bright queen whom Paris called his wife,  
Their eyes suffused with tears, humble their mien,  
And at her knees, on each side one, they fell  
Besieging her. Back start the slaves, back starts  
Each Phrygian minister, some fearing fraud,  
More unsuspecting some, whilst others thought  
This dragon, crimson with his mother's blood,  
The beauteous Spartan in his toils enclosed.

CHOR. Where then wast thou ? Hadst thou first fled through  
fear ?

PHRY. I then was standing, in our Phrygian mode  
Was standing near, and with the feathered fan  
Raised the soft gales to breathe upon her cheeks,  
In our barbaric mode, to bid their breath  
Sport in the ringlets of her waving hair.  
Her curious fingers guide the thread, the spoils  
Of Phrygia, whose rich texture formed the woof  
To adorn the purple pall, a mournful present  
To Clytemnestra. With mild voice Orestes  
Entreats her to arise, and go with him  
To an age-honoured altar, in old times  
The seat of Pelops, his great ancestor,  
That she might hear his words. He led her, ah !  
He led her ! Unprophetic of her fate  
She followed. The vile Phocian, his compeer,  
Seized the occasion, and with stern command  
Bade us be gone ; then, dragged to separate cells,  
Confined us from our royal mistress far.

CHOR. What terrible event ensued ? Oh, say !

PHRY. Goddess of Ida, potent, potent queen !  
What scenes of blood, what impious deeds these eyes,  
These eyes amidst the royal rooms beheld !  
Each in his fierce hand grasped the sword concealed



Beneath their purple vests, his fiery glance.  
 Heedful of interruption, darting round ;  
 Then, like two mountain boars, before the queen  
 They stood, and thundered, "Thou shalt die, shalt die ;  
 Thy coward husband kills thee, who in Argos  
 Betrays his brother's family to death."  
 She shrieked aloud, and raising her white arm  
 In miserable manner beat her head ;  
 Then bent her golden-sandalled feet to flight.  
 But, rushing fierce, Orestes in her hair  
 Locked his rude hand, and bending to the left  
 Her head, prepared to plunge th' impetuous sword  
 Deep in her throat.

CHOR.                      Where were her Phrygians then ?  
 They ran, belike, on all sides to her aid.

PHRY. Roused by her cries we burst the bars, and each  
 From forth his separate cell rushed to her aid :  
 Some in their hasty hands snatched stones, some seized  
 The beamy spear, th' unwieldy falchion some :  
 'Gainst us in dreadless rage the Phocian came.  
 Fierce as the Trojan Hector, fierce as Ajax,  
 Whose triple-crested helm I saw, I saw  
 Dreadfully waving in the gates of Priam.  
 Clashing our swords met his ; but then, oh then  
 Was seen how weak, how spiritless our arms  
 Opposed in fight against the force of Greece ;  
 One hasty running, dying one, one gashed  
 With wounds, wild with affright another bends  
 Imploring mercy ; sheltering in the dark  
 We fly, and all was terror, blood, and death.  
 Just as th' uplifted sword threatened to shed  
 Her mother's blood on th' earth, Hermione came ;  
 Swift with unhallowed rage they dart on her,  
 And seize their trembling prey ; then turn again  
 To execute the work of death on Helen.  
 Meanwhile, O heaven ! O earth ! O day ! O night !  
 Forth from the chamber through the vestibule,  
 Whether by some enchantment, by the power  
 Of magic, or the stealth of fav'ring gods,

She vanished. What hath happened since I know not,  
 Intent on hasty flight to save myself.  
 For all his toils, all his distressful toils,  
 Barren return hath Menelaus received,  
 And led his beauteous wife from Troy in vain.

CHOR. Terror succeeds to terror ; for mine eyes  
 Behold Orestes there before the house  
 Walk with disordered pace, and grasp his sword.

ORESTES, PHRYGIAN, CHORUS.

ORES. Where is the slave, who this way fled my sword ?

PHRY. Low at thy feet, such our barbaric use,  
 Thus prostrate I implore thy mercy, king.

ORES. This is not Ilium, but the land of Greece.

PHRY. In any land life to the wise is sweet.

ORES. Hast thou raised cries to call the Spartan's aid ?

PHRY. Thee rather would I aid : more worthy thou.

ORES. This Helen then, with justice did she die ?

PHRY. Most justly : had she three lives, she should lose them.

ORES. Thy servile fear smooths thy dissembling tongue.

PHRY. No. Should she live who wasted Greece and Troy ?

ORES. Swear, I will kill thee else, thou flatterest not.

PHRY. Now by my life I swear, sincerely swear.

ORES. Was the steel dreadful thus to all at Troy ?

PHRY. Keep thy sword off : near, it glares terror to me.

ORES. Freeze not to stone, as seen the Gorgon's head.

PHRY. Let me not die ; no Gorgon's head I know.

ORES. Fears a slave death, the end of all his ills ?

PHRY. To slave or free sweet is the light of heaven.

ORES. Well urged : thy wisdom saves thee : go thou in.

PHRY. Thou wilt not kill me then ?

ORES. In safety go.

PHRY. Thy words breathe music.

ORES. But I may retract

This lenity.

PHRY. No music breathes in that.

ORES. Fool, if thou thinkst thy blood shall stain my sword,  
 Nor woman thou, nor in the scale of men.

To stop thy clamours came I : Argos soon  
Is roused at every noise. For Menelaus  
We fear him not : our swords shall welcome him :  
Let him then come, proud of his golden locks  
That wanton o'er his shoulders. Should he raise  
The men of Argos, and for Helen's death  
Lead them against this house, and menace me,  
My sister, and my friend, he shall behold  
His daughter, with his wife, weltring in blood.

CHORUS.

1st SEMICHOR. Other horrors, other woes  
Rise this royal house t' enclose.  
2nd SEMICHOR. Haste we then to spread th' alarm  
Or keep silence, shunning harm ?  
1st SEMICHOR. See the sudden smoke arise,  
Waving tidings to the skies !  
2nd SEMICHOR. From the torch that dusky wreath  
Threatens ruin, flames, and death.  
CHOR. What event the gods assign,  
Mortal, to submit is thine.  
Here some stern relentless power  
Bade the horrid ruin roar,  
When the blood-stained car beneath  
Myrtilus lay rolled in death.

But see, with hasty step the Spartan comes,  
Informed, belike, of these rough deeds of death.  
Quick, quick, ye royal youths—make fast these gates,  
Prevent the foe ; for to th' unfortunate,  
Like thee, Orestes, dreadful are the wrongs  
Of insolent and rude prosperity.

MENELAUS *alone*, ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA,  
HERMIONE *alone*, CHORUS.

MEN. I heard the horrid and atrocious deeds  
Of these two lions, men I call them not ;  
My wife not dead, I hear, but disappeared.  
This idle rumour I received from one,

Bewildered with his fears ; the bitter scoff,  
The artifice of him that slew his mother.  
Open the gates here : slaves, I speak to you,  
Unbar the gates, that I at least may save  
My daughter from their bloody hands, and bear  
My poor lost wife away, whose murderers  
This vengeful hand should recompense with death.

ORES. Stand off ! forbear ! Spartan, I speak to thee  
Tow'ring in pride ! Dare but to touch the gate,  
I will rend down this ancient pinnacle  
That crowns the battlements, and crush thy head.  
The gates are shut, and barricadoed strong,  
To guard me from thy efforts and thy friends'.

MEN. Ha ! what is this ? What mean these blazing  
torches ?

Why on the battlements this station fixed ?

Why at my daughter's bosom points that sword ?

ORES. Is it thy will to question, or to hear me ?

MEN. Neither ; but by compulsion I must hear thee.

ORES. Be thou assured, thy daughter I will kill.

MEN. Thou hast killed Helen : wilt thou shed more blood ?

ORES. Would I had killed her, nor the gods beguiled me !

MEN. Her murder dost thou tauntingly deny ?

ORES. With sorrow I deny it : 'twas my wish.

MEN. What to have done ? Thy words excite my fear.

ORES. To sacrifice this baleful pest of Greece.

MEN. Give me the body, that I may entomb it.

ORES. Ask of the gods : but I will kill thy daughter.

MEN. The mother slain, wilt thou add blood to blood ?

ORES. T' avenge my father ; yet betrayed by thee.

MEN. Art thou not sated with thy mother's blood ?

ORES. Never, with punishing such impious women.

MEN. And art thou, Pylades, accomplice with him ?

ORES. His silence speaks : sufficient my reply.

MEN. But short thy joy, unless thou fly on wings.

ORES. We will not fly : but we will fire the house.

MEN. Thy father's royal seat in ruins sink !

ORES. That it may ne'er be thine : and at the flames  
Her will I sacrifice.

MEN. Ay, kill her, do ;  
 I will have vengeance, ample vengeance on thee.  
 ORES. Thus then.  
 MEN. Ah, stay thee ! do not, do not kill her !  
 ORES. Be silent now, and with composure bear  
 Th' afflictions, which with justice light on thee.  
 MEN. What, is it justice then that thou shouldst live ?  
 ORES. Live ! Ay, and reign.  
 MEN. Where wouldst thou reign ?  
 ORES. In Argos,  
 Pelasgian Argos.  
 MEN. At the sacred rites  
 Well would those hands the cleansing lavers touch.  
 ORES. And wherefore not ?  
 MEN. And, ere the spear is raised,  
 Offer the hallowed victim !  
 ORES. Dost not thou ?  
 MEN. And well : my hands are pure.  
 ORES. But not thy heart.  
 MEN. Who will hold converse with thee ?  
 ORES. He that loves  
 His father.  
 MEN. He too, who reveres his mother ?  
 ORES. Happy his state.  
 MEN. Unhappy then is thine.  
 ORES. Because such impious women I abhor.  
 MEN. Take, from my daughter's bosom take thy sword.  
 ORES. False are thy words.  
 MEN. My daughter wilt thou kill ?  
 ORES. Now thou speakst truth.  
 MEN. Ah me, what shall I do ?  
 ORES. Go to the Argives, and persuade them——  
 MEN. What  
 Shall I persuade them ?  
 ORES. Ask the state to spare  
 Our lives.  
 MEN. Or you will kill my daughter ?  
 ORES. Ay.  
 MEN. Unhappy Helen !

ORES. Am not I unhappy ?

MEN. From Troy I brought thee to be butchered here.

ORES. Would it were so !

MEN. After a thousands toils——

ORES. But not for me.

MEN. These dreadful ills fall on me.

ORES. Thou hadst no will to serve me.

MEN. Thou hast caught me.

ORES. No : by thy baseness thou hast caught thyself.

But go, Electra, fire the house below :

And thou, my Pylades, my faithful friend,

Set from these battlements the roof on fire.

MEN. Arm, arm, ye sons of Greece ! ye warlike Argives,  
Fly to my aid. Despair of life, and guilt  
Stained with his mother's blood, prompt his bold hand  
In one wide ruin to involve the city.

#### APOLLO.

Cease, Menelaus, forbear this fiery rage :

Apollo speaks : revere the present god.

And thou, Orestes, whose uplifted sword

Threatens that virgin's life, forbear, and hear.

Her whom thy rage, to work him woe, assailed,

This radiant form in tissued clouds enshrined,

Snatched from thy sword I saved ; such the command

Of heaven's high king : his beauteous progeny

Soars above mortal fate, and orb'd in heaven

Immortal 'midst her kindred stars she shines,

Beaming kind influence on the mariners.

Lead to thy royal house another wife ;

Since by her beauty the just gods awoke

'Twixt Greece and Troy the rage of war, to free

The groaning earth from impious multitudes.

Such is the fate of Helen. Thou, Orestes,

Quitting this country, in Parrhasia's plains

For one revolving year thy dwelling fix,

And give the place thy name ; that honour share

With Azan and with Arcas. Pass from thence

To Athens ; there against the Furies urge  
 Thy plea, acquit thee of thy mother's blood :  
 There in that awful court the gods shall sit  
 Thy judges ; and thy just cause shall prevail.  
 Her, at whose throat thy angry sword was pointed,  
 The gods decree thy wife ; though Pyrrhus dreams  
 Of nuptial joys, the Delphic sword awaits him ;  
 My vengeance on Achilles this demands.  
 To Pylades thy sister is betrothed ;  
 Give him his bride : and happiness attends  
 To pour her blessings on their future years.  
 Thou, Menelaus, yield that Orestes reign  
 At Argos : haste to Sparta, reign thou there,  
 And wear that crown, the dowry of thy wife,  
 The well-earned meed of all the toils she caused thee.  
 It shall be mine t' appease the state to him,  
 Compelled by my command to slay his mother.

ORES. Thou god of oracles, prophet of good,  
 True are thy words, and faithful. Yet my soul  
 Was struck with horror, lest some vengeful power  
 Spoke this, which I misdeemed thy voice divine.  
 But all is well. Obedient to thy word  
 I drop the sword : and, if her father gives her,  
 Wish to receive Hermione my bride.

MEN. Daughter of Jove, bright Helen, hail ! Thy state  
 'Midst the blest mansions of th' immortal gods  
 I reverence. Now, Orestes, give I thee  
 My daughter, at the bidding of the god.  
 Illustrious in thy race thou takest a wife  
 Not less illustrious : blessings on thy hand  
 That takes her, and on mine that gives her to thee.

APOL. Each now depart, as I commanded : cease  
 Your strife.

MEN. T' obey is ours.

ORES. Such are my thoughts.  
 Now, Menelaus, to all these evils past  
 My soul speaks peace ; and to thy oracles.

APOL. Go then your ways, now go, and reverence Peace,  
 Most beauteous of the gods. I will conduct

Th' immortal Helen to the house of Jove  
O'er yon star-spangled sky, to the bright seats  
Where, with majestic Juno, and the bloom  
Of Hebe ever young, Alcides' joy,  
A goddess she shall hear the vows of mortals ;  
And honoured with the twin-born sons of Jove  
Guide the tost mariners, and rule the sea.

CHOR. O victory, I revere thy sober triumphs :  
Thus ever guard, thus ever crown my life !



## IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

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THE translator thought it not improper to arrange the tragedies of Euripides, as he had before arranged those of Æschylus, according to the historical series of their subjects. [Some variation has been made in this edition to secure equal interest for each of the volumes, but the relation of plays to each other has been kept in view.] The following tragedies have relation to the Trojan war and the events which arose from it: these are great and important, have a close connection, and reflect light on each other by being thus placed in regular succession. [The other plays of Euripides relating to the Trojan war will be included in the next of the three volumes which, in course of time, will secure a complete translation of that poet in the "Universal Library."]

The combined fleet of Greece was assembled at Aulis, and had been long detained there by contrary winds: the Oracle declared that they would not be permitted to sail, unless Iphigenia were sacrificed to Diana; but that, if the goddess were thus propitiated, they should reach the Phrygian shore, and lay the towers of Troy level with the ground. Upon this Agamemnon had been prevailed upon to send for his daughter under pretence of giving her in marriage to Achilles: the arguments of Ulysses, his affection for his brother, his desire of glory, his love of his country, and his reverence for the gods, had impelled him to this measure: but he had consented with reluctance, and felt all the fondness of a father. This conflict of his mind is finely described throughout the drama. -CIS. length paternal tenderness prevails over all other consideratio.

he secretly forms measures to prevent her coming, is detected, and disappointed. Iphigenia arrives attended by her mother ; but instead of her nuptials with the most accomplished of all the Grecian princes, she soon learns that she is destined to bleed as a victim on the altar of Diana. Never did Euripides succeed better in painting scenes of distress ; never was he more powerful in exciting the softest emotions of pity. The characters of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra are admirably sustained ; Aristotle seems to have formed a different judgment concerning that of Iphigenia (Poetic, c. xv.). For the reader's satisfaction, the objection made by that critic and the defence of the poet are here subjoined. " Aristotle's words are : ' Iphigenia is an instance of the inconsistent character ; for there is no probable conformity between her fears and supplications at first, and her firmness and resolution afterwards.' But how doth this appear, independently of the name of the great critic ? Iphigenia is drawn indeed, at first, fearful and suppliant ; and surely with the greatest observance of nature. The account of her destination to the altar was sudden, and without the least preparation ; and, as Lucretius well observes, *Nubendi tempore in ipso* ; when her thoughts were employed, and, according to the simplicity of those times, confessed to be so, on her promised nuptials. The cause of such destination too, as appeared at first, was the private family interest of Menelaus. All this justifies, or rather demands, the strongest expression of female fear and weakness. ' But she afterwards recants, and voluntarily devotes herself to the altar.' And this with the same strict attention to probability. She had now informed herself of the importance of the case. Her devotement was the demand of Apollo, and the joint petition of all Greece. The glory of her country, the dignity and interest of her family, the life of the generous Achilles, and her own future fame, were all nearly concerned in it. All this considered, together with the high, heroic sentiments of those times, and the superior merit, as was believed, of voluntary devotement, Iphigenia's character must have been very unfit for the distress of a whole tragedy to turn upon, if she had not, in the end, discovered the readiest submission to her appointment. But, to show with at wonderful propriety the poet knew to sustain his characters,

we find her, after all, and notwithstanding the heroism of the change, in a strong and passionate apostrophe to her native Mycenæ, confessing some involuntary apprehensions and regrets, the remains of that instinctive abhorrence of death, which had before strongly possessed her.

'Once the bright star of Greece —  
But I submit to die.'

This I take to be not only a full vindication of the consistency of Iphigenia's character, but as delicate a stroke of nature, as is, perhaps, to be found in any writer."—*Comment, on the Epistle to the Pisos.*

Happy Euripides in such an advocate! P. Brumoy has the same sentiments concerning the character of Iphigenia. The reasons he employs are nearly the same. "Only," to continue the words of the same critic, "he confirms them all by showing that the Iphigenia of Racine, which is modelled, not according to the practice of Euripides, but the comment of Aristotle, is, in all respects, so much the worse for it." The same must be said concerning the character of Achilles, as it is drawn by Racine: P. Brumoy, in the comparison, has well defended the Achilles of Euripides "on the sure principles of nature and common sense." Yet, with him, we ought to allow much to the different manners of different ages and different nations: and, in justice to the merit of the excellent Racine, we should reflect that he wrote for the French nation, Euripides for the Athenians. It is difficult to forbear pointing out the singular beauties of this fine drama; but "I have too much respect for the understanding of my readers to take that liberty."

The scene is at Aulis, before the house of Agamemnon.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AGAMEMNON.

MENELAUS.

ACHILLES.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

IPHIGENIA.

ATTENDANT

MESSANGER.

CHORUS, FEMALES OF CHALCIS.

## AGAMEMNON, ATTENDANT.

AGAM. Thou old and faithful servant, from the house  
Come forth.

ATT. I come. What recent care disturbs  
The royal Agamemnon ?

AGAM. Thou shalt know.

ATT. I haste : for not to sleep inclines my age,  
Nor in these eyes is dull.

AGAM. What star is that  
There sailing ?

ATT. Sirius, in his middle height  
Near the seven Pleiads riding.

AGAM. Not the sound  
Of birds is heard, nor of the sea ; the winds  
Are hushed in silence on the Euripus.

ATT. Why doth the royal Agamemnon then  
Rush from his tent ? Through Aulis quiet reigns,  
And motionless the watch their station hold.  
Let us go in.

AGAM. I envy thee, old man ;  
I envy all, who pass their lives secure  
From danger, to the world, to fame unknown :  
But those to greatness raised I envy not.

ATT. The dignity of life in greatness lies.

AGAM. Yet is that dignity unsafe : the chase  
Of glory is delightful, but when won  
It brings disquiet. One while from the gods,  
Their worship ill directed, ruin comes ;  
One while the various and discordant views  
Of men distract the mind, and wound its peace.

ATT. This I approve not in a potent chief.  
Not to all good, without a taste of ill,  
Did Atreus give thee birth : it must be thine  
To joy, it likewise must be thine to grieve,  
For thou art mortal born ; and though perchance  
To thee not pleasing, thus the gods decree.  
The blazing lamp didst thou display, and write

That letter, which thou holdest in thy hand  
 E'en now ; the writing didst thou blot ; then seal,  
 And open it again ; then on the floor  
 Cast it in grief, the warm tear from thine eye  
 Fast flowing, in thy thoughts distracted near,  
 As it should seem, to madness. What new care,  
 My royal lord, say what new care disturbs thee ?  
 Tell me, impart it to me : to a man  
 Honest and faithful wilt thou speak, a man  
 By Tyndarus of old sent to thy wife,  
 A nuptial present, to attend the bride,  
 One of tried faith, and to his office just.

AGAM. To Leda were three beauteous daughters born,  
 Phœbe, and Clytemnestra now my wife,  
 And Helena : to her the youths of Greece,  
 Those of the noblest rank, as wooers came.  
 Each menaced high, on deeds of blood resolved,  
 Should he not win the virgin ; this was cause  
 To Tyndarus her father of much doubt,  
 To give, or not to give her, and how best  
 To make good fortune his ; at length this thought  
 Occurred, that each to each the wooers give  
 Their oath, and plight their hands, and on the flames  
 Pour the libations, and with solemn vows  
 Bind their firm faith that him who should obtain  
 The virgin for his bride they all would aid ;  
 If any dared to seize and bear her off,  
 And drive by force her husband from her bed,  
 All would unite in arms, and lay his town,  
 Greek or Barbaric, level with the ground.  
 Their faith thus pledged, the aged Tyndarus  
 Beneath them well with cautious prudence wrought ;  
 He gave his daughter of her wooers one  
 To choose, tow'rd's whom the gentle gales of love  
 Should waft her : and she chose (O had he ne'er  
 Obtained that envied favour !) Menelaus.  
 To Lacedemon now the Phrygian came,  
 The judge between the beauties of the sky,  
 So fame reports him : gorgeous was his dress,

Glitt'ring with gold and vermeil-tinctured dies,  
Barbaric elegance He loved, was loved,  
And bore the beauteous Helena away  
To Ida's pastoral groves ; for Menelaus  
Was absent then. Deserted thus through Greece  
He raved, the oaths attesting giv'n of old  
To Tyndarus, conjuring all t' avenge  
His wrongs. On this the Grecians rush to war,  
And taking arms come hither to the straits  
Of Aulis, furnished well with ships, with spears,  
And num'rous chariots : me they chose their chief,  
Doing a grace to Menelaus, for that  
I am his brother. O that this high honour  
Some other had received, not I ! The troops  
Collected and embodied, here we sit  
Unactive, and from Aulis wish to sail  
In vain. The prophet Calchas, 'midst the gloom  
That darkened on our minds, at length pronounced  
That Iphigenia, my virgin daughter,  
I to Diana, goddess of this land,  
Must sacrifice : this victim giv'n, the winds  
Shall swell our sails, and Troy beneath our arms  
Be humbled in the dust ; but if denied,  
These things are not to be. This when I heard,  
I said that by the herald's voice the troops  
Should be discharged, for never would I bear  
To slay my daughter ; till my brother came,  
And, urging many a plea, persuaded me  
To bear these dreadful things. I wrote, I sealed  
A letter to my wife, that she should send  
Her daughter to Achilles as a bride  
Affianced : of his worth I spoke in terms  
Of amplest honour ; said he would not sail  
With Greece, unless from us his nuptial bed  
Was decked in Phthia : with my wife this found  
Easy belief, the false tale that announced  
Her daughter's destined marriage. Of the Greeks  
None but Ulysses, Calchas, and my brother  
To this are conscious. What I then resolved

Imprudently, I prudently retract,  
 Committed to this letter, which thou sawst me  
 This night, old man, unfold and fold again  
 Take then this letter, haste, to Argos go.  
 That there is written, in its secret fold's  
 Enclosed. I will explain to thee; for thou  
 Art faithful to my wife and to my house.

ATT. Read it, explain its purport. that my words  
 May aptly with thy writing correspond.

AGAM. "Whate'er my former letter gave in charge, [*Kēaas*.  
 Daughter of Leda, this I write to thee,  
 That to Eubœa's winding way thou send not  
 Thy daughter, nor to Aulis rising high  
 Above the waves; for to some other time  
 The nuptials of the virgin we defer."

ATT. Will not Achilles, frustrate of his bride,  
 Be fired with rage 'gainst thee, and 'gainst thy wife?  
 This might be dang'rous. is not such thy thought?

AGAM. His name indeed we used, but nothing more:  
 Achilles knows not of the nuptials, knows  
 Of our transactions nought, nor that I named  
 My daughter his, as to his bed betrothed.

ATT. This, royal Agamemnon, is a deed  
 Of perilous daring. So thy daughter, named  
 A bride to him who from a goddess draws  
 His birth, thou ledd'st a victim for the Grecians.

AGAM. Distraction's in the thought: unhappy me;  
 My misery sinks me! But away! To age  
 Remitting nothing, use thy utmost speed.

ATT. I hasten, king.

AGAM. Now sit not on the bank  
 Of shaded fountain, nor indulge to sleep.

ATT. Think better of me.

AGAM. Take good heed, where'er  
 The ways divide, observing that the car,  
 Whose wheels swift-rolling bear my daughter hither  
 Where rides the fleet of Greece, escape thee not.

ATT. I shall observe.

AGAM. Now haste thee from the tent





*Antistrophe 1.*

Diana's hallowed grove I seek,  
Where to the goddess frequent victims bleed,  
And through it pass with speed,  
The warm blush kindling on my youthful cheek,  
Ardent my wish to view the guard of shields,  
The armed tents of Greece extended wide,  
Their horse in warlike muster o'er the fields,  
And all the glorious scene of martial pride.

There either Ajax struck my sight,  
One from Oileus draws his birth, and one  
From greater Telamon,  
Salamis glories in her hero's might.  
These sitting with Protesilaus I saw  
Delighted with the various-figured die.  
But Palamedes, proud his birth to draw  
From Neptune, with Tydides whirled on high  
The massy discus : Merion there  
Rejoiced the manly sport to share,  
Wondrous the hero's form and martial grace ;  
Ulysses there, whose island's craggy brow  
Frowns o'er the darkened waves below ;  
And Nireus, fairest of the Grecian race.

*Epode 1.*

Swift as the wingéd wing  
Achilles, whom the goddess Thetis bore,  
And gave to Chiron in his rigid lore  
To train his infant mind,  
I saw : in all his arms arrayed,  
The cumbrous equipage of war,  
His speed he o'er the strand displayed,  
Contending with the harnessed car :  
High o'er the beam I saw Eumelus rise,  
I heard his animating cries,  
And marked each courser beauteous to behold,  
Their glitt'ring bits embossed with gold :  
Those in the midst, the yoke that bear.  
Dappled with silvery marks their hair ;

And each on either side  
 That wind, obedient to the guiding rein,  
 With equal swiftness o'er the plain,  
 Bright as the flaming gold, with pride  
     On snow-white fetlocks bound :  
 With rival speed I saw Pelides fly,  
 In arms, the whirling chariot nigh,  
 Light o'er the pebbled ground.

*Strophe 2.*

Hence to the numerous fleet I fly,  
     A vast and glorious sight,  
 To gratify my curious eye,  
     A woman's dear delight.  
 On the right wing from Phthia's strand  
 The Myrmidons, a valiant band,  
     In fifty gallant vessels ride ;  
 And by the Nereids we behold,  
 Bright on the prows in sculptured gold,  
     Achilles' arms are signified.

*Antistrophe 2.*

The Argive ships of equal oars  
     Next these their station hold ;  
 The son of Talaus leads their powers,  
     And Sthenelus the bold.  
 In order next th' Athenian train  
 In sixty vessels plough the main,  
     Their host the son of Theseus leads :  
 Adorning the Munychian prows  
 In arms a sculptured Pallas glows,  
     Inspiring high heroic deeds.

[*The second Epode is lost.*]

*Strophe 3.*

Bœotia's host I there surveyed,  
     In fifty ships the warriors came :  
 An imaged form each ship displayed,  
     Proud argument of Theban fame ;

High on each sculptured prow their Cadmus stands,  
A golden dragon holding in his hands ;  
And Leïtus, who boasts his birth  
From those that sprung embattled from the earth,  
Commands their naval war.  
Those, who their race from Phocis draw,  
Ranged on the foaming flood I saw.  
Oïlean Ajax there,  
Equal his numbers, leads the Locrian train,  
Leaving illustrious Thronion's plain.

*Antistrophe 3.*

From high Mycenæ's rampired towers,  
Towers by the lab'ring Cyclops wrought,  
The son of Atreus leads his powers ;  
A hundred ships the monarch brought ;  
And faithful at his side, as friend with friend,  
These eyes beheld the injured chief attend ;  
That for the fair, her house who fled,  
Lightly preferring a barbaric bed,  
Greece with a gen'rous rage  
Might rise and vindicate his cause.  
His troops from Pylos Nestor draws,  
Reverend the warrior's age ;  
On his tall vessels sculptured Alpheus stands,  
A bull, and seems to spurn the sands.

*Epode 3.*

From Ænia's stormy coast  
By Geneus led twelve vessels plough the tide ;  
The chiefs of Elis anchor by their side ;  
These through th' extended host  
Are called the brave Epëan train,  
And Eurytus their force commands.  
Dashed by their oars the foaming main  
Whitens beneath the Taphian bands ;  
Meges their leader, from that dangerous shore,  
Where rough Echinæ's vext rocks roar.

The Salaminian Ajax to the right  
 Stretches, the left wing to unite ;  
 The last in station, o'er the deep  
 His fleetest vessels circling sweep.  
 In all their gallant pride

I heard, I saw them stretch : to meet their war  
 Should the barbaric slight barks dare,  
 Shattered and sunk beneath the tide,  
 They will return no more.

I heard, I saw ; and all the warlike train  
 Faithful my memory shall retain,  
 When reached my native shore.

ATTENDANT, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

ATT. This, Menelaus, is wrong ; thou shouldst not do it.

MEN. Go to : thou wouldst be faithful to thy lords !

ATT. That is an honour to me, no reproach.

MEN. Wouldst thou do what thou shouldst not, thou shalt  
 rue it.

ATT. Thou shouldst not ope the letter which I bear.

MEN. Thou shouldst not bear what to all Greece is hurtful.

ATT. With others dispute that ; leave this to me.

MEN. I will not let it go.

ATT. Nor will I yield it.

MEN. Soon shall thy head this sceptre stain with blood.

ATT. Nay, it were glorious for my lords to die.

MEN. Let go : a slave presuming to dispute !

ATT. My royal master, we are wronged : by force  
 Thy letter hath he wrested from my hands,  
 To what behoves him paying no regard.

AGAMEMNON, MENELAUS, ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

AGAM. Why this indecent tumult at my doors ?

ATT. My words have greater right than his t' inform thee.

AGAM. Why, Menelaus, this strife with him, this force ?

MEN. Look, if thou darst, at me ; then will I speak.

AGAM. Fear I, from Atreus born, to raise mine eye ?

MEN. Dost thou see this, with basest orders charged ?

AGAM. I see it : from thy hand first give it back.

MEN. Not till I've shown all Greece what's written here.

AGAM. Knowst thou, this opened, what thou shouldst not know?

MEN. To wring thy heart, opening thy secret baseness.

AGAM. Where didst thou take it? Gods, hast thou no shame?

MEN. Watching from Argos if thy daughter comes.

AGAM. On my affairs a spy ! How shameless this !

MEN. Urged by my will : for I am not thy slave.

AGAM. Have I not leave in mine own house to rule ?

MEN. How wayward is thy mind, thy present thoughts  
At variance with the past, and soon to change !

AGAM. Finely thy words are tuned : but know thou this,  
The wily tongue is a detested ill.

MEN. The wav'ring mind is a base property,  
And darkens to our friends : I will convince thee :  
But if through pride thou turn thee from the truth,  
Small share of praise shalt thou receive from me.  
Thou knowest, when thy aim was to command  
The troops of Greece at Troy, thy semblance formed  
As if affecting nothing, but thy wish  
Most ardent ; what humility was thine :  
Pressing the hand of each, thy door to all  
Was open, to the meanest, and thy speech  
To all addressed in order, e'en to those  
Who willed no converse with thee, seeking thus  
By courteous manners thy ambitious wish  
To purchase. The supreme command obtained,  
Soon were thy manners changed, and to thy friends  
Not friendly as before ; nor was access  
Easy, oft too denied. Ill it becomes  
An honest man, when raised to power, to change  
His manners, but then most to be approved  
Firm to his friends, when through his advanced state  
He most can serve them : this I urge against thee  
As my first charge, where first I found thee base.  
But when thou camst to Aulis, with the troops  
Of Greece in arms, to nothing didst thou sink,  
Astonished at thy fortune, by the gods  
Denied a gale to swell thy sails. The Greeks

Required thee to dismiss the ships, nor toil  
 In vain at Aulis : how dejected then  
 Thy visage, thy confusion then how great  
 Not to command the thousand ships, and fill  
 The fields of Priam with embattled hosts ?  
 Me then didst thou address, "What shall I do,  
 Or what expedient find, of this command,  
 Of this high honour not to be deprived ?"  
 When Calchas at the hallowed rites declared  
 That to Diana thou must sacrifice  
 Thy daughter, and the Grecians then should sail,  
 With joy thy thoughts were heightened ; willingly  
 The virgin as a victim didst thou promise  
 And freely, not by force (urge not that plea),  
 Dost thou despatch a message to thy wife  
 To send thy daughter hither, the pretence  
 Her nuptials with Achilles. But thy mind  
 Was soon averse, and secretly devised  
 Letters of diff'rent import ; now in sooth  
 Thou wilt not be the murd'rer of thy daughter.  
 This air is witness, which hath heard these things  
 Of thee. To thousands this hath chanced in tasks  
 Of arduous nature ; freely they engage,  
 Then from the high attempt retreat with shame,  
 Th' ill judgment of their countrymen in part,  
 Justice in part the cause, for in the proof  
 They feel their want of power to guard the state.  
 But most I mourn th' unhappy fate of Greece,  
 Who, prompt her noble vengeance to inflict  
 On the barbarians, worthless as they are,  
 Shall let them now go scoffing off, through thee,  
 And through thy daughter. Never for his wealth  
 Would I appoint a ruler o'er the state,  
 Or chief in arms : wisdom should mark the man  
 Who in his country bears the sov'reign sway :  
 Every man sage in counsel is a leader.

CHOR. How dreadful, when 'twixt brothers words arise,  
 And fierce disputings kindle into strife !

AGAM. For this I will rebuke thee ; but in brief,

Not raising high the eye of insolence,  
But with more temperance, because thou art  
My brother ; for a good man loves to act  
With modesty. But tell me, why with rage  
Dost thou thus swell ? why rolls thy blood-streaked eye ?  
Who injures thee ? of what art thou in want ?  
A rich connubial bed, is that thy wish ?  
This to procure thee is not in my power.  
Thou didst possess one, but ill governed it.  
Shall I, who with no fault have e'er been charged,  
Suffer for thy ill conduct ? Is thy heart  
Racked at my honours ? But a beauteous wife  
In thy fond arms it is thy wish to hold,  
Transgressing decency and reason : base  
Of a bad man the pleasures. But if I,  
Before ill-judging, have with sober thought  
My purpose changed, must I be therefore deemed  
Reft of my sense ? Thou rather, who hast lost  
A wife that brings thee shame, yet dost with warmth  
Wish to regain her, would the fav'ring god  
Grant thee that fortune. Of the nuptials eager  
The suitors pledged to Tyndarus their oath,  
Unwise : the hope, I ween, of the fair bride  
Effected this, more than thy grace or power :  
Take these, and march to war ; soon wilt thou find  
What oaths avail ill plighted, with slight thought,  
And by compulsion. But I will not slay  
My children : and thy wishes o'erleap justice,  
The punishment of thy flagitious wife.  
My nights, my days would pass away in tears,  
Should I with outrage and injustice wrong  
Those who from me derived their birth. These things  
Have I replied to thee in brief, with ease  
And plainness : but if thou wilt not be wise,  
What concerns me I rightly will appoint.

CHOR. These words are different from his former speech,  
And well the father's melting pity show.

MEN. Ah me unhappy ! I have then no friends.

AGAM. Yes, if thou wish not to destroy thy friends.

MEN. How wilt thou show one father gave us birth?

AGAM. I would be wise, but not be mad with thee.

MEN. Friends with their friends in common ought to grieve.

AGAM. Be thy deeds friendly then, not painful to me.

MEN. And with all Greece shouldst thou not bear this pain?

AGAM. All Greece, and thee, hath heaven-sent frenzy seized.

MEN. Thou gloriest in thy sceptre, and betray'st

Thy brother. But to other means I turn,

And other friends.

AGAMEMNON, MENELAUS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MESS. I come, imperial lord

Of Greece, thy daughter leading, in thine house

Named Iphigenia by thee; and thy wife

Attends her, Clytemnestra, with thy son

Orestes, sight delightful to thine eyes

After this tedious absence from thy home.

But wearied with this length of way, beside

A beauteous-flowing fountain they repose,

Themselves refreshing, and their steeds, unyoked

To taste the fresh grass of the verdant mead.

I run to bring thee notice, that prepared

Thou mayst receive them: this the troops have heard

For through the camp swift the report was spread

That Iphigenia is arrived, and all

Haste to the sight desirous to behold

Thy daughter; for to every eye the great

Appear illustrious, with high splendour graced.

Is this her bridal day, some ask, or what

Intended? Or through fond desire to see

His daughter did th' imperial Agamemnon

Send for the virgin? Others mightst thou hear,

The princess to Diana, queen of Aulis,

Will they present? Who shall receive her hand?

But haste, begin the rites, and crown thy head.

And thou too, royal Menelaus, prepare

The hymeneals; let the joyful house

Re-echo to the pipe and festive dance:

For happy to the virgin comes this day.



AGAM. 'Tis well: thou hast my thanks. But go thou in;  
All things, if fortune favours, shall be well.—  
Ah me, unhappy me! What shall I say,  
And whence begin? In what a chain of fate  
Am I enfolded? Fortune, wiser far  
Than all my vain designs, hath closely wrought  
Beneath me. What advantages attend  
Ignoble birth? They are allowed to weep  
And utter sad complaints; but to the noble  
This is denied. Led by the pride of rank,  
Which rules us, to the people we are slaves.  
I am indeed ashamed to drop the tear,  
And not to drop the tear I am ashamed,  
Fall'n as I am on these great miseries.  
Well, let it be. But how shall I address  
My wife, or how receive her? with what eye  
Look on her? For to all my former ills  
Coming unbidden, she hath added weight  
Of new distress: yet decency required  
Her presence with her daughter, to attend  
Her nuptials, and present the dearest gifts:  
There will she find me false. But thee, O thee,  
Unhappy bride (bride call I thee! how soon  
To Pluto to be wedded!), how I pity!  
Methinks I hear her suppliant voice thus speak,  
"My father, wilt thou kill me? Mayst thou make  
Thyself such nuptials, and whoe'er to thee  
Is dear." Orestes, standing near, shall cry  
In accents inarticulate, his speech,  
As yet unformed, articulate to me.  
Unhappy me! what ruin hath the son  
Of Priam brought on me! This Paris caused  
When he espoused the faithless Helena.

CHOR. I, as a woman and a stranger ought,  
Am moved with pity at a monarch's woes.

MEN. Give me thy hand, my brother, let me clasp it.

AGAM. I give it: thou art conqueror, I a wretch.

MEN. By Pelops, called the father of thy father  
And mine: by Atreus, whence we draw our birth,

I swear, that what I now shall say to thee  
 Comes from my heart, nought feigned, but what I think.  
 When from thine eye I saw thee drop the tear,  
 I pitied thee, and sympathizing dropped  
 Myself a tear : its former reas'nings now  
 My soul foregoes, no more unkind to thee,  
 But, as thou feelest, feels : nay, I exhort thee  
 Neither to slay thy daughter, nor to rank  
 What concerns me most high : it is not just  
 That grief should rend thy heart, whilst my affairs  
 Go pleasantly ; that any of thy house  
 Should die, whilst mine behold the light. For what  
 Can be my purpose ? Might I not contract  
 Other illustrious nuptials, if my wish  
 Were other nuptials ? But at such a price,  
 My brother's ruin, which behoves me least,  
 Should I recover Helena, an ill  
 Dear with a blessing purchased ? Folly ruled  
 Before, and youth : but on a nearer view  
 I see what 'tis to yield a child to death.  
 Besides th' unhappy virgin, near allied  
 By ties of consanguinity, excites  
 My pity, destined for a nuptial bed  
 To fall a victim : what hath she to do,  
 The virgin daughter, with my Helena ?  
 Discharged from Aulis let the troops depart.  
 And thou, my brother, cease to dew thine eyes  
 With tears, which cause the drops to start in mine.  
 Touching thy daughter hast thou oracles  
 Which respect me ; no more be that respect ;  
 My part I cede to thee. My thoughts are changed  
 From cruel, and I feel what I should feel :  
 Nature returns, and all a brother's love  
 Warm in my heart revives : of no bad man  
 The manners these, to follow still the best.

CHOR. Generous thy words, and worthy Tantalus  
 The son of Jove : thou dost not shame thy birth.

AGAM. Now I applaud thee ; for beyond my thought  
 Rightly thy words conclude, and worthy thee.

MEN. For love and for ambition variance oft  
Rises 'twixt brothers : but my soul abhors  
This mutual harshness of unnatural strife.

AGAM. But dire necessity compels me now  
My daughter's bloody slaughter to complete.

MEN. Who shall compel thee to destroy thy child?

AGAM. The whole assembled host of Greece in arms.

MEN. Not if to Argos her thou send again.

AGAM. That might be secret : this must be revealed.

MEN. What? Of the people have not too great dread.

AGAM. The oracle will Calchas sound to all.

MEN. Not if ere that he die : an easy thing.

AGAM. Vainglorious is the whole prophetic breed.

MEN. And of no use when present, of no good.

AGAM. But seest thou not what enters now my thought?

MEN. Can I conjecture what thou dost not speak?

AGAM. He of the race of Sisyphus knows all.

MEN. Nor thee, nor me, will e'er Ulysses harm.

AGAM. Artful, the people as he wills he leads.

MEN. With vanity, a mighty ill, possessed.

AGAM. Think then thou seest him stand amidst the troops,  
Declaring to them all the oracle

Announced by Calchas : how this sacrifice

I promised to Diana, then refused.

Soon will he lead the Grecians, and excite them,

Me in their fury having slain, and thee,

To sacrifice the virgin. Should I fly

To Argos, marching thither they will raze

Her rampires by the Cyclops raised, and spread

Destruction o'er the land. Unhappy me !

Such ills are mine, to this severe distress

Brought by the gods ! Yet one thing make thy care :

Take heed, as through the host thy steps return,

These tidings reach not Clytemnestra's ear,

Till I the virgin to th' infernal king

Shall have presented, that I may abide

With as few tears as may be my hard fate.

Silence, ye female strangers, be your part,

CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

How blest their golden days, who prove  
The gentle joys of temp'rate love,  
When modest Venus on the couch attends,  
Pleased with tranquillity to dwell !  
But high the madd'ning passions swell,  
When both his bows the bright-haired tyrant bends ;  
One, by the Graces strung, imparts  
Pure joys that brighten in our hearts ;  
And one, life's wild tumultuous war.  
Far, beauteous Queen, from us may this be far ;  
Mine be Love's pure and temp'rate grace,  
The holy flame of chaste desire,  
Mild Venus, in my breast inspire ;  
There never have ungoverned passion place !

*Antistrophe.*

Nature in man we diff'ring find,  
And diff'rent manners mark his mind :  
When good, they give each excellence to spring,  
And education's sage control  
To every virtue forms the soul :  
Meek modesty then Wisdom loves to bring,  
She loves to bring each various grace,  
Which shows where Duty hath its place,  
Whence Glory beams divinely bright,  
And pours on life unfailing streams of light.  
Virtues in woman fairest shine  
That silent guard Love's holy flame ;  
Man's various worth ascends to fame  
Most, when t' exalt the state his great design.

*Epeode.*

Thence, Paris, didst thou come,  
Where, on Ida's pastured brow  
Trained the snowy herds among,  
Thine was the barbaric song,  
Thine to bid the sweet notes flow,

Whilst thy Phrygian pipe breathes measures,  
Caught from those harmonious treasures  
Which Olympus taught his reed.  
Unmilked herds around thee feed,  
Whilst the contending beauties of the skies  
From thee expect the prize.  
Hence camest thou to the Grecian shore,  
The ivory-cinctured house before :  
Thy eyes the flames of love inspire,  
And Helen, as she gazed, received the fire :  
Her charms too rushed upon thy soul,  
And madness reigned without control.  
Hence discord, discord calls to war :  
With many a ship, with many a spear  
Greece rushes on, impetuous to destroy  
The rampired walls of Troy.  
How splendid are the fortunes of the great !  
See, Iphigenia, daughter of the king,  
And Clytemnestra, sprung from Tyndarus,  
My queen ! From noble ancestors they draw  
Their birth, and are to fortune's highest state  
Exalted : to th' inferior ranks of life  
The powerful and the wealthy are as gods.  
Daughters of Chalcis, near them let us stand,  
And courteous in our hands receive the queen,  
As from her car she to the ground descends,  
With duteous zeal, that she may tread secure ;  
And that th' illustrious daughter of the king  
On her arrival nothing may disturb :  
For, strangers as we are, let us not cause  
These Argive strangers trouble or affright.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, ATTENDANTS, CHORUS.

CLYT. This as a prosperous omen I accept,  
Thy courtesy and gentleness of speech :  
And hence conceive I hope that I am come  
To happy nuptials leading her a bride.  
But from the chariot take the dow'ral gifts  
Brought with me for the virgin ; to the house

Bear them with faithful care. My daughter, quit  
 The harnessed chariot, and thy delicate foot  
 Place on the ground. Ye females, in your arms  
 Receive her; she is weak; and from the car  
 Conduct her down: stretch one of you your hand,  
 Supporting me, that may I leave this seat  
 In seemly manner. Some before the yoke  
 Stand nigh the horses, for their eye is quick,  
 Soon startled, and unruly: now receive  
 This child, Orestes, Agamemnon's son,  
 For he is yet an infant. Dost thou sleep,  
 My son? The rolling chariot hath subdued thee:  
 Wake to thy sister's marriage happily;  
 Th' alliance of a noble youth, thyself  
 Noble, shalt thou receive, the godlike son  
 Of Thetis. Come, my daughter, near me stand,  
 Stand near thy mother, Iphigenia, show  
 These strangers how supremely I am blest  
 In thee; and here address thee to thy father.

IPH. Would it offend my mother, should I run  
 And throw myself into my father's arms?

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

CLYT. Imperial chief of Greece, my honoured lord,  
 To thy commands obedient we are come.

IPH. My father, to thy arms I wish to run,  
 Clusped to thy bosom; dear to me thy sight  
 After such absence: be not angry with me.

AGAM. Enjoy thy wish: of all my children thou  
 Hast of thy father always been most fond.

IPH. Absent so long, with joy I look on thee.

AGAM. And I on thee: so this is mutual joy.

IPH. Well hast thou done to bring me to thy presence.

AGAM. If well, or not well done, I cannot say.

IPH. A gloom hangs on thee 'midst thy joy to see me.

AGAM. A king and chief hath many anxious cares.

IPH. But let me have thee now: think not of cares.

AGAM. Thou hast me all: each thought is bent on thee.

IPH. Smooth then thy brow, and look with fondness on me.

AGAM. To see thee gives me joy, such joy as mine.

IPH. Yet from thy melting eye thou pourst the tear.

AGAM. Long, very long the absence to ensue.

IPH. I know not, dearest father, what this means.

AGAM. Thy prudent speech makes me more pity thee.

IPH. Might it divert thee, idly will I talk.

AGAM. Can I be silent? O, thou hast my thanks.

IPH. At home, my father, with thy children stay.

AGAM. I wish it: but, that wish denied, I grieve.

IPH. A mischief on the war, and Sparta's wrongs!

AGAM. Others will feel the mischief: I have felt it.

IPH. How long thy absence in the bay of Aulis!

AGAM. Something detains me yet, detains the host.

IPH. Where, father, do they say the Phrygians dwell?

AGAM. Where O that Priam's Paris ne'er had lived!

IPH. And when thou leavst me is the voyage long?

AGAM. To the same place thou with thy father goest.

IPH. O that with honour I might sail with thee!

AGAM. Thou shalt, where thou thy father shalt remember.

IPH. Go I alone, or sails my mother with me?

AGAM. Alone: nor father there, nor mother goes.

IPH. Dost thou then place me in some other house?

AGAM. Ask not: for virgins should not know these things.

IPH. Haste to me then from Troy, victorious there.

AGAM. Here first I must present a sacrifice.

IPH. Those rites thou with the priests must well prepare.

AGAM. Thou shalt be witness, nigh the lavers placed.

IPH. Shall we then round the altar raise the song?

AGAM. Thee happier than myself in this I deem,

That thou art ignorant. But go thou in,

Present thee to the virgins. O, that kiss,

That dear embrace, how painful from a child,

Who from a father must so long be absent!

Ah me, that breast, those cheeks, those golden tresses!

What piercing sorrows hath the Phrygian state

And Helen caused us! But I check my words;

For when I touch thee, in my melting eyes

The sudden moisture rises. Go thou in.—

Daughter of Leda, if with pity touched

I feel my grief too strong, for that I soon  
 Shall to Achilles my dear child consign,  
 Forgive me : happy is it so to place  
 A daughter, yet it pains a father's heart  
 When he delivers to another house  
 A child, the object of his tender care.

CLYT. Nor is my heart insensible. I feel,  
 Be thou assured, an equal grief, nor want  
 From thee monitions, when I lead the virgin  
 With hymeneal rites ; but custom, joined  
 With time, will check it. Well : his name I know  
 To whom thou hast betrothed thy daughter ; more  
 I wish to know, his lineage whence he draws.

AGAM. Ægina was the daughter of Asopus.

CLYT. With her what mortal wedded, or what god ?

AGAM. Jove, sire of Æacus, CEnone's chief.

CLYT. What son of Æacus possessed his house ?

AGAM. Peleus ; the daughter he of Nereus weds.

CLYT. By force, or by the god's consent obtained ?

AGAM. Her father gave her, first by Jove betrothed.

CLYT. Where did he wed her ? In the ocean waves ?

AGAM. Where Chiron dwells, on Pelion's awful heights.

CLYT. The Centaur race, they say, inhabit there.

AGAM. The gods there present graced his nuptial feast.

CLYT. Achilles did the sire or Thetis train ?

AGAM. Chiron, that from bad men he might not learn.

CLYT. Wise he who took, wise they who gave the charge.

AGAM. Such is the man who shall thy daughter wed.

CLYT. Not disapproved ; but where in Greece his seat ?

AGAM. Where flows Apidanus through Phthia's bounds.

CLYT. Thine and my daughter thither will he lead ?

AGAM. When he obtains her, this will be his care.

CLYT. Blest may they be ! But when the bridal day ?

AGAM. Soon as the moon's propitious circle fills.

CLYT. Is for the bride the previous victim slain ?

AGAM. Soon shall it : this employs my pre-ent thought.

CLYT. And wilt thou next the nuptial feast prepare ?

AGAM. When I have offered what the gods require.

CLYT. Where for the females shall we deck the feast ?



AGAM. Here, where the gallant fleet at anchor rides.

CLYT. Amply supply then what th' occasion claims.

AGAM. Knowst thou what now I wish thee do? Obey me.

CLYT. In what? Thou long hast trained me to obey.

AGAM. We in the place where now the bridegroom is——

CLYT. Without the mother! What to me belongs——

AGAM. Will give thy daughter 'midst th' assembled Greeks.

CLYT. And where, whilst this is doing, shall I be?

AGAM. To Argos go, thy charge the virgins there.

CLYT. And leave my daughter? Who shall raise the torch?

AGAM. The light, to deck the nuptials, I will hold.

CLYT. Custom forbids: nor wouldst thou deem it seemly.

AGAM. Nor decent that thou mix with martial troops.

CLYT. But decent that the mother give the daughter.

AGAM. Nor leave the younger in the house alone.

CLYT. In close apartments they are guarded well.

AGAM. Let me persuade thee.

CLYT. By the potent queen,

Goddess of Argos, no. Of things abroad

Take thou the charge: within the house my care

Shall deck the virgin's nuptials as is meet. *[She goes in.]*

AGAM. Unhappy me! In vain I came, my hopes

Are vanished; out of sight it was my wish

To send my wife: thus I devise, thus form

My wily purpose, studious to beguile

Those dearest to my soul, in all my aims

Confounded. Hence to Calchas will I go

The Seer, inquiring what the goddess wills,

To me unfortunate, a grief to Greece.

A wise man in his house should find a wife

Gentle and courteous, or no wife at all.

CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

To Simois, and his silver tide

In eddies whirling through the plain,

The fleet of Greece in gallant pride

Vengeful shall bear this martial train;

To Ilion's rampired towers shall bear,  
 And Troy, by Phœbus loved, the war.  
 Cassandra there, when on her soul  
 The gods prophetic transports roll,  
 Her brows with verdant laurel loves to bind,  
 Her yellow tresses streaming to the wind.

*Antistrophe.*

The Trojans high on Ilium's towers,  
 And round the walls of Troy shall stand ;  
 When Mars to Simois leads his powers,  
 And furious ploughs the hostile strand ;  
 From Priam's ruined house to bear  
 Again to Greece the fatal fair,  
 Whose brothers, sons of Jove, on high  
 Twin stars adorn the spangled sky,  
 Rushing to war his brazen shield he rears,  
 And glitt'ring round him blaze the Grecian spears.

*Epode.*

Phrygian Pergamus around,  
 Walls of rock with turrets crowned,  
 Mars the furious war shall lead :  
 Blood his flaming sword shall stain,  
 As from the trunk he hews the warrior's head,  
 And to the dust shakes Troy's proud walls again.  
 Virgins with their woes opprest,  
 And Priam's queen their fall lament ;  
 Jove-born Helen beats her breast,  
 In anguish, from her lover rent.  
 From me, from mine be far the fate  
 Which Lydia's gorgeous dames with sighs,  
 Whilst Troy's sad matrons wipe their dewy eyes,  
 In mutual converse o'er the web relate,  
 " Who will not rend her crisped hair,  
 Who will not pour the gushing tear,  
 Low sunk in dust our ruined walls ?  
 Bright daughter of the bird, whose neck  
 Arched in proud state the white plumes deck,  
 For thee in dust our country falls :

If true the fame that mighty Jove  
 Changed to a swan sought Leda's love :  
 Or fabling poets from Pieria's spring  
 Their wanton and indecent legends bring."

ACHILLES, CHORUS.

ACH. Where is the leader of the Grecian host ?  
 Who of th' attendants tells him that Achilles,  
 The son of Peleus, seeks him at the gate ?—  
 Different our state, who nigh the Euripus  
 Wait here : unwedded some, their houses left  
 In solitude, here sit upon the shore ;  
 And childless others leave their nuptial beds ;  
 Such ardour, not without the gods, through Greece  
 Flames for this war. What touches me to speak  
 Is mine : let others what their need requires  
 Themselves explain. Thessalia's pleasant fields  
 And Peleus leaving, at the narrow surge  
 Of Euripus I wait, the Myrmidons  
 Restraining : with impatient instance oft  
 They urge me, " Why, Achilles, stay we here ?  
 What tedious length of time is yet to pass  
 To Ilium ere we sail ? Wouldst thou do aught ?  
 Do it, or lead us home ; nor here await  
 The sons of Atreus, and their cold delays."

CLYTEMNESTRA, ACHILLES, CHORUS.

CLYT. Son of the goddess Thetis, in the house  
 Hearing thy words I come without the gates.

ACH. O revered Modesty, whom do mine eyes  
 Behold ? Her form bears dignity and grace.

CLYT. Not strange thou knowst us not, before not seen ;  
 But thy regard to Modesty I praise.

ACH. Who art thou ? To the Grecian camp why come,  
 A woman 'midst a host of men in arms ?

CLYT. Daughter of Leda, Clytemnestra named,  
 Am I, the royal Agamemnon's wife.

ACH. Well hast thou answered, and in brief : but shame  
 Were mine with wedded dames to hold discourse.

CLYT. Stay : wherefore dost thou fly me ? With my hand  
Join thy right hand, pledge of thy happy nuptials.

ACH. My hand with thine ! To Agamemnon this  
Were wrong, if, what I have no right, I touch.

CLYT. Son of the sea-born Nereid, thou hast right,  
Much right, since thou my daughter soon wilt wed.

ACH. Wed, dost thou say ? Amazement chains my tongue :  
What secret purpose hath thy strange discourse ?

CLYT. 'Tis ever thus : the modest, 'midst new friends,  
At mention of their nuptials are ashamed.

ACH. Ne'er did I woo thy daughter ; ne'er did word  
Of nuptials from th' Atridæ reach my ear.

CLYT. What may this mean ? Thou wonderst at my words,  
And equal wonder thine excite in me.

ACH. All is conjecture, common to us both,  
Both haply are by words alike deceived.

CLYT. I am abused, according nuptials here  
Never designed, it seems ; I blush at this.

ACH. Some one perchance 'gainst thee and me hath framed  
This mock. Regard it not ; light let it pass.

CLYT. Farewell ! I cannot look upon thy face,  
Basely abused, and made a liar thus.

ACH. Thee too I bid farewell : within the house  
Inquiries from thy husband will I make.

ATTENDANT, CLYTEMNESTRA, ACHILLES, CHORUS.

ATT. Stay, stranger of the race of Æacus,  
Stay, goddess-born : daughter of Leda, stay.

ACH. Who from the gates calls with his earnest voice ?

ATT. A slave : in that I boast not : no proud vaunt  
My fortune will admit.

ACH. Whose slave ? Not mine :  
For I with Agamemnon have no share.

ATT. Hers, who stands here before the house, the gif  
Of Tyndarus her father.

ACH. Well, we stay ;  
What wouldst thou ? why hast thou detained me ? Speak.

ATT. Are you alone before this royal house ?

ACH. Speak as to us alone : come from the gates.

ATT. O fortune, and my provident caution, save  
Those whom I wish to save!

ACH. Thy words portend  
Something not brief, and seem of import high.

CLYT. Delay not for my hand: speak what thou wouldst.

ATT. Dost thou then know me, who I am, to thee  
And to thy children how benevolent?

CLYT. I know thee, an old servant of my house.

ATT. And to the royal Agamemnon given  
Part of thy dowry.

CLYT. With us didst thou come  
To Argos, and hast there been always mine.

ATT. So is it: hence to thee I bear goodwill,  
But to thy husband less.

CLYT. Well then, to me,  
Whate'er thy wish to speak, at length disclose.

ATT. Thy daughter will her father slay, her father  
With his own hand.

CLYT. How! I abhor thy words,  
Old man: thou art not in thy perfect sense.

ATT. Striking her white neck with the ruthless sword.

CLYT. Unhappy me! Hath madness seized his mind?

ATT. No: save to thee and to thy daughter, sound  
His sense: in this he errs from reason wide.

CLYT. What cause? What Fury fires him to the deed?

ATT. The Oracles, and Calchas, that the troops  
May sail.

CLYT. Sail whither? Wretched me! She too  
How wretched, whom her father will destroy!

ATT. To the proud seats of Troy, thence to bring back  
Helen, the Spartan's wife.

CLYT. Of her return  
Is Iphigenia doomed the fatal price?

ATT. E'en so: thy daughter will her father slay  
A victim to Diana.

CLYT. From my home  
To win me were these nuptials then devised

ATT. Thy daughter that with pleasure thou mightst lead  
To wed Achilles.

CLYT. To perdition then  
Thou comst, my daughter, and thy mother with thee.

ATT. Piteous of both the suff'rings, and th' attempt  
Of Agamemnon dreadful.

CLYT. With my woes  
I sink, mine eye no longer holds the tear.

ATT. Painful the tear that falls for children lost.

CLYT. But whence, old man, knowst thou, or heardst thou  
this?

ATT. I took my way, charged with a letter to thee,  
Since that which had been sent.

CLYT. Its purport what?  
Forbidding, or exhorting me to bring  
My daughter to her death?

ATT. This not to bring her  
Gave charge: for wise were then thy husband's thoughts.

CLYT. Charged with this letter to me, why to me  
Didst thou not give it?

ATT. Menelaus by force  
Took it away, the author of these ills.

CLYT. Son of the sea-born Nereid, son of Peleus,  
Dost thou hear this?

ACH. What makes thee wretched, lady,  
I hear: and ill what touches me I brook.

CLYT. My daughter they will slay, the false pretence  
Thy nuptials.

ACH. On thy husband I too charge  
Much blame, nor light doth my resentment rise.

CLYT. Low at thy knees I will not blush to fall,  
Of mortal birth to one of heavenly race.  
Why should I now be proud? Or what demands,  
More than a daughter's life, my anxious care?  
Protect, O goddess-born, a wretched mother;  
Protect a virgin called thy bride: her head  
With garlands—ah, in vain!—yet did I crown,  
And led her as by thee to be espoused;  
Now to be slain I bring her: but on thee,  
If thou protect her not, reproach will fall;  
For, though not joined in marriage, thou wast called

The husband of the virgin. By this cheek,  
By this right hand, by her that gave thee birth  
(For me thy name hath ruined, and from thee  
I therefore claim protection), I have now  
No altar, but thy knee, to which to fly,  
I have no friend but thee: the fell designs  
Of Agamemnon's ruthless heart thou hearest;  
And I, a woman, as thou seest, am come  
To this unruly camp, in mischiefs bold,  
Of use but when they list. If thou shalt dare  
Stretch forth thine hand to aid me, I shall find  
Safety: if not, then am I lost indeed.

CHOR. To be a mother is the amplest source  
Of nature's dear affections: this to all  
Is common, for their children anxious thought.

ACH. To noblest thoughts my tow'ring soul is raised,  
Which at the woes of others knows to melt,  
And bear with moderation fortune's smiles.

CHOR. These are the men, who, trained in reason's lore,  
As wisdom guides them, form their life aright.

ACH. There is a time, when not to build too much  
On our own wisdom is agreeable:

But then there is a time, when to exert  
Our judgment is of use. By Chiron trained,  
Of mortals the most righteous, I have learned  
Simplicity of manners. To the sons  
Of Atreus, when their high commands are stamped  
With honour, my obedience shall be paid:  
Where honour bids not, I shall not obey:  
But my free nature here, and when at Troy,  
Preserved, my spear shall to my utmost power  
Add glory to the war. But thee, oppressed  
With miseries, and by those most dear to thee,  
Far as a young man may, so strong I feel  
The touch of pity, thee will I protect;  
And never shall thy daughter, who was called  
Mine, by her father's hand be slain; to weave  
His wily trains thy husband ne'er shall make  
Me his pretext; for so my name would slay

Thy daughter, though it lifted not the sword.  
The cause indeed thy husband ; yet not pure  
My person, if through me, and through my nuptials,  
The virgin perish, suffering dreadful things  
And wrongs, at which astonished nature starts.  
I were the basest of the Greeks, a thing  
Nought worth (and Menelaus might well be ranked  
'Mongst men), no more the son of Peleus deemed,  
But of some cruel demon, should my name,  
Pleaded to screen thy husband's purpose, kill her.  
By Nereus, who beneath the wat'ry waves  
Was trained, the sire of Thetis, whence my birth,  
The royal Agememnon shall not touch  
Thy daughter, with his finger shall not touch her,  
Nor e'en her robes : else Sipylus, a mean  
Barbaric town, from whence our chiefs derive  
Their race, shall be illustrious, and my realm,  
Phthia, be slighted as unknown to fame.  
His lustral lavers and his salted cakes  
With sorrow shall the prophet Calchas bear  
Away. The prophet ! What is he ? A man  
Who speaks 'mongst many falsehoods but few truths,  
Whene'er chance leads him to speak true ; when false,  
The prophet is no more. With nuptial rites  
Why should I say how many virgins sue  
To be united to me ? But of that  
No more. The royal Agememnon wrongs me,  
Greatly he wrongs me : ought he not from me,  
Would he betroth his daughter, ask my name ?  
Th' assent of Clytemnestra then with ease  
Had I obtained to give her daughter to me.  
I to the Greeks had given her, if to Troy  
For this their course were checked ; the public good  
Of those with whom I join my arms t' exalt  
I should not have refused : but with the chiefs  
I now am nothing, held of no esteem  
To act, or not to act, in glory's cause.  
But soon this sword shall know whom, ere to Troy  
I come, with drops of blood I shall distain,



Whoe'er he be that shall attempt to take  
Thy daughter from me. Rest thou then in peace ;  
I, as a guardian god, am come to thee :  
Great is the contest, yet it shall be proved.

CHOR. Worthy, O son of Pelcus, of thyself,  
Worthy the sea-born goddess, are thy words.

CLYT. How shall I praise thee, that due bounds my words  
Exceed not, nor beneath thy merit sink,  
Thy grace impairing : for the good, when praised,  
Feel something of disgust, if to excess  
Commended. But I blush at words that raise  
Pity at private woes, whilst of my ills  
No share is thine : yet lovely is the sight,  
When, stranger though he be, to the distressed  
A good man gives assistance. Pity me ;  
My sufferings call for pity : when I thought  
To have thee for a son, I fondly fed  
A false and flatt'ring hope. To thee perchance,  
And to thy future nuptials, this might be  
An omen, should my daughter die ; 'gainst this  
Behoves thee guard. Well did thy words begin,  
And well they ended : be it then thy will  
My daughter shall be saved. Wilt thou she fall  
A suppliant at thy knees ? This ill becomes  
A virgin ; yet, if such thy will, with all  
Her blushes shall she come, and in her eye  
Ingenuous modesty : or the same grace  
Shall I, if absent she, obtain from thee ?

ACH. Let her remain within : for Modesty  
With her own modest dignity is pleased.

CLYT. Yet must we sue to thee with earnest prayer.

ACH. Nor bring thy daughter, lady, to our sight,  
Nor ours be rude reproach. Th' assembled host,  
At leisure from their own domestic cares,  
Loves the malignant jest and sland'rous tale.  
Suppliant or not, alike shall you obtain  
From me this grace : the contest shall be mine,  
Great as it is, to free you from your ills.  
Of one thing be assured, ne'er shall my tongue

Utter a falsehood : if I speak untruth,  
 And mock thee with vain promise, let me die :  
 But as I save thy daughter may I live.

CLYT. O be thou blest, thus aiding the unhappy !

ACH. Now hear me, how success may best be ours.

CLYT. What wouldst thou ? My attention thou mayst claim.

ACH. The father's purpose let persuasion change.

CLYT. He, void of spirit, too much fears the host.

ACH. Yet reason o'er the spiritless prevails.

CLYT. Small are my hopes : yet, say, what must I do ?

ACH. First, be a suppliant to him not to slay  
 His children : if rejected, come to me.

If thy entreaties win him, of my aid

There is no need : thy daughter's life is saved,

I with my friend shall be on better terms,

And nought of blame the army to my charge

Can then impute, if I by reason wish

T' effect my purpose, not by violence.

Well to thy warmest wish may this succeed,

And to thy friends', accomplished without me.

CLYT. How wise thy words ! Whate'er to thee seems right  
 Shall be attempted. Should I not effect

The things I wish, where shall I see thee next,

Or whither bend my wretched steps to find

Thy hand, my firm protector 'gainst these ills ?

ACH. Far as occasion shall require, myself

Will be thy guard. But with disordered step

Let no one see thee hurrying through the throng

Of Grecians, nor disgrace thy father's house :

On Tyndarus unmerited would fall

Aught of ill fame, for he is great in Greece.

CLYT. It shall be so. Lead thou ; on thee to wait

Me it behoves. If there are gods, on thee,

Just as thou art, their blessings must attend :

If not, to what effect is all our toil ?

## CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

What were the strains that Hymen gave to swell,  
The Lybian pipe its warbles sweet  
Attemp'ring to the chorded shell,  
That loves to guide the mazy-winding feet,  
Whilst the whisp'ring reed around  
Breathes a soft responsive sound,  
When to the feast of gods on Pelion's brow  
The golden-sandalled Muses took their way,  
Loose to the gale their beauteous tresses flow,  
Thee, Peleus, gracing, and thy bridal day,  
As they pierce the tangled grove,  
O'er the mountain as they rove  
Where the Centaur race reside,  
Peleus and his lovely bride  
They hail, and those wild scenes among  
Pour the mellifluous song.  
The Phrygian Ganymede of form divine,  
A royal youth of Dardan race,  
Advanced the feast of Jove to grace,  
Poured from the glowing bowls the sparkling wine.  
Fifty nymphs the white sands o'er,  
Daughters they of Nereus hoar,  
To the nuptials light advance,  
And weave the circling dance.

*Antistrophe.*

The Centaurs waving high their spears of pine,  
Their heads with grassy garlands crowned,  
Came to the bowls, the feast divine,  
Their hoofs swift-bounding o'er the rattling ground.  
There the nymphs of Thessaly  
Raised their tuneful voices high ;  
The prophet Phœbus joined the solemn strain,  
And Chiron skilled to trace the Fates' decree.  
"Daughter of Nereus," sung the raptured train,  
"A son, bright beam of beauty, shall from thee

Draw his birth, who will advance,  
 Dreadful with his flaming lance,  
 With his Myrmidons that wield  
 Fierce in fight the spear and shield,  
 To th' illustrious realms of Troy,  
     And her proud towers destroy :  
 His manly limbs refulgent arms enfold ;  
     Vulcan, at the mother's prayer,  
     Shall the glorious gift prepare,  
 And all the hero blaze in burnished gold."  
     Thus when Peleus won his bride,  
     Of the Nereid train the pride,  
     Came the gods in bright array  
     To grace their nuptial day.

*Epode.*

But thee, unhappy maid, thy head  
     With flow'ry garlands Greece shall crown ;  
 As from the mountain cave's cool shade  
     Some beauteous heifer coming down,  
 Her neck no rude yoke knows, decreed  
 A victim at some shrine to bleed.  
 But now a human neck must bow,  
 And now the virgin's blood must flow,  
 Not trained the sylvan wilds among  
 To rustic pipe or pastoral song ;  
 Her the fond mother decked with pride  
 As to some Grecian chief a bride.  
 The lovely form, the beauteous face,  
 And modest virtue's blushing grace  
 Avail no more : in evil hour  
 Impiety hath seized the power ;  
 A slighted outcast Virtue fails,  
 Injustice o'er the laws prevails :  
 The common danger none describes,  
 Th' impending vengeance of the skies.

## CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

CLYT. I am come forth, if haply I may see  
My husband ; long his absence since he left  
The house. In tears is my unhappy daughter,  
And heaves the frequent sigh, since she hath heard  
The death to which her father destines her.  
I spoke of one that is approaching nigh,  
This Agamemnon, who will soon be found  
Daring against his children impious deeds.

## AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

AGAM. Daughter of Leda, to my wish I find thee  
Before the house, that from my daughter's ear  
Apart I may speak words, which ill beseems  
A virgin, soon to be a bride, to hear.

CLYT. What is it ? Let not the occasion pass.

AGAM. Send now thy daughter to her father's charge  
Committed ; for the lavers ready stand,  
The salted cakes, which o'er the lustral fire  
The hand must cast, the heifers too, whose blood  
Must in black streams, before the nuptials, flow  
To the chaste queen Diana, are prepared.

CLYT. Thy words indeed are gracious, but thy deeds  
I know not, should I name them, how to praise.  
Yet come thou forth, my daughter, for to thee  
Are all thy father's purposes well known :  
And bring thy brother, bring Orestes, wrapt  
Close in thy vests, my child.—See, she is here  
In prompt obedience to thee : what for her,  
What for myself is meet, that shall I speak.

## AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

AGAM. Why weeps my daughter ? cheerful now no more  
Thy look, nor pleasant : wherefore is thine eye  
Fixed on the ground, thy robe before it held ?

IPH. Ah me ! Whence first shall I begin to speak

My ills? For all in ills have found a first,  
A last, a middle, and successive train.

AGAM. Why is it that you all are drawn together,  
With terror and confusion in your looks?

CLYT. Answer to what I ask with honest truth.

AGAM. Speak freely : to be questioned is my wish.

CLYT. Thine and my daughter art thou bent to slay?

AGAM. Ah, what a question! What suspicion this!

CLYT. To this without evasion answer first.

AGAM. Ask what is meet, thou what is meet shalt hear.

CLYT. I ask this only ; to this only speak.

AGAM. O fate ! O fortune ! O my awful doom !

CLYT. And mine, and hers, one to us wretched three !

AGAM. In what have I done wrong?

CLYT. Canst thou ask this  
Of me? Thy purpose is unwise and ill.

AGAM. I am undone : my secrets are betrayed.

CLYT. I have heard all, know all, which thou wouldst do  
Against me : e'en thy silence and thy sighs  
Confess it ; labour not to give it words.

AGAM. Lo, I am silent ; for to misery  
I should add shamelessness by speaking false.

CLYT. Now hear me, for my thoughts will I unfold  
In no obscure and coloured mode of speech.  
First then, for first with this will I upbraid thee,  
Me didst thou wed against my will, and seize  
By force ; my former husband Tantalus  
By thee was slain. By thee my infant son,  
Torn from my breast by violence, was whirled  
And dashed against the ground. The sons of Jove,  
My brothers, glitt'ring on their steeds in arms  
Advanced against thee ; but old Tyndarus,  
My father, saved thee, at his knees become  
A suppliant ; and hence didst thou obtain  
My bed. To thee and to thy house my thoughts  
Thus reconciled, thou shalt thyself attest  
How irreproachable a wife I was,  
How chaste, with what attention I increased  
The splendour of thy house, that ent'ring there

Thou hadst delight, and going out, with thee  
 Went happiness along. A wife like this  
 Is a rare prize ; the worthless are not rare.  
 Three daughters have I borne thee, and this son.  
 Of one of these wilt thou—O piercing grief !—  
 Deprive me. Should one ask thee, for what cause  
 Thy daughter wilt thou kill, what wouldst thou say ?  
 Speak ; or I must speak for thee ! E'en for this,  
 That Menelaus may regain Helena.  
 Well would it be, if, for his wanton wife  
 Our children made the price, what most we hate  
 With what is dearest to us we redeem.  
 But if thou lead the forces, leaving me  
 At Argos, should thy absence then be long,  
 Think what my heart must feel, when in the house  
 I see the seats all vacant of my child,  
 And her apartment vacant : I shall sit  
 Alone, in tears, thus ever wailing her :  
 " Thy father, O my child, hath slain thee ; he  
 That gave thee birth, hath killed thee, not another,  
 Nor by another hand ; this is the prize  
 He left his house." But do not, by the gods,  
 Do not compel me to be aught but good  
 To thee, nor be thou aught but good to me ;  
 Since there will want a slight pretence alone  
 For me, and for my daughters left at home,  
 To welcome, as becomes us, thy return.  
 Well, thou wilt sacrifice thy child : what vows  
 Wilt thou then form ? what blessing wilt thou ask  
 To wait thee, thou, who dost thy daughter slay—  
 Thou, who with shame to this unlucky war  
 Art marching ? Is it just that I should pray  
 For aught of good to thee ? Should I not deem  
 The gods unwise, if they their favours shower  
 On those who stain their willing hands with blood ?  
 Wilt thou, to Argos when returned, embrace  
 Thy children ? But thou hast no right : thy face  
 Which of thy children will behold, if one  
 With cool deliberate purpose thou shalt kill ?

Now to this point I come : if thee alone  
 To bear the sceptre, thee to lead the troops  
 Th' occasion called, shouldst thou not thus have urged  
 Thy just appeal to Greece: "Is it your will,  
 Ye Grecians, to the Phrygian shores to sail?  
 Cast then the lot whose daughter must be slain."  
 This had at least been equal; nor hadst thou  
 Been singled out from all to give thy child  
 A victim for the Greeks. Or Menelaus,  
 Whose cause this is, should for the mother slay  
 Hermione : but I, who to thy bed  
 Am faithful, of my child shall be deprived,  
 And she, that hath misdones, at her return  
 To Sparta her young daughter shall bear back,  
 And thus be happy. Aught if I have said  
 Amiss, reply to that : but if my words  
 Speak nought but sober reason, do not slay  
 Thy child, and mine : and thus thou wilt be wise.

CHOR. Be thou persuaded : reason bids preserve  
 Our children: this no mortal can gainsay.

IPH. Had I, my father, the persuasive voice  
 Of Orpheus, and his skill to charm the rocks  
 To follow me, and soothe whome'er I please  
 With winning words, I would make trial of it ;  
 But I have nothing to present thee now  
 Save tears, my only eloquence ; and those  
 I can present thee. On thy knees I hang,  
 A suppliant wreath, this body, which she bore  
 To thee. Ah ! kill me not in youth's fresh prime.  
 Sweet is the light of heaven ; compel me not  
 What is beneath to view. I was the first  
 To call thee father, me thou first didst call  
 Thy child ; I was the first that on thy knees  
 Fondly caressed thee, and from thee received  
 The fond caress ; this was thy speech to me :  
 " Shall I, my child, e'er see thee in some house  
 Of splendour, happy in thy husband, live,  
 And flourish, as becomes my dignity ? "  
 My speech to thee was, leaning 'gainst thy cheek,



Which with my hand I now caress : " And what  
 Shall I then do for thee ? Shall I receive  
 My father when grown old, and in my house  
 Cheer him with each fond office, to repay  
 The careful nurture which he gave my youth ? "   
 These words are on my memory deep impressed ;  
 Thou hast forgot them, and wilt kill thy child.  
 By Pelops I entreat thee, by thy sire  
 Atreus, by this my mother, who before  
 Suffered for me the pangs of childbirth, now  
 These pangs again to suffer, do not kill me.  
 If Paris be enamoured of his bride,  
 His Helen, what concerns it me ? and how  
 Comes he to my destruction ? Look upon me,  
 Give me a smile, give me a kiss, my father,  
 That, if my words persuade thee not, in death  
 I may have this memorial of thy love.  
 My brother, small assistance canst thou give  
 Thy friends, yet for thy sister with thy tears  
 Implore thy father that she may not die :  
 E'en infants have a sense of ills : and see,  
 My father, silent though he be, he sues  
 To thee : be gentle to me, on my life  
 Have pity. Thy two children by this beard  
 Entreat thee, thy dear children : one is yet  
 An infant, one to riper years arrived.  
 I will sum all in this, which shall contain  
 More than long speech : To view the light of life  
 To mortals is most sweet, but all beneath  
 Is nothing : of his senses is he reft  
 Who hath a wish to die ; for life, though ill,  
 Excels whate'er there is of good in death.

CHOR. For thee, unhappy Helen, and thy love,  
 A contest dreadful, and surcharged with woes,  
 To the Atridæ and their children comes.

AGAM. What calls for pity, and what not, I know :  
 I love my children, else I should be void  
 Of reason : to dare this is dreadful to me,  
 And not to dare is dreadful. I perforce

Must do it. What a naval camp is here  
 You see, how many kings of Greece arrayed  
 In glitt'ring arms : to Ilium's towers are these  
 Denied t' advance, unless I offer thee  
 A victim, thus the prophet Calchas speaks,  
 Denied from her foundations to o'erturn  
 Illustrious Troy ; and through the Grecian host  
 Maddens the fierce desire to sail with speed  
 'Gainst the Barbarians' land, and check their rage  
 For Grecian dames. My daughters these will slay  
 At Argos, you too will they slay, and me,  
 Should I, the goddess not revering, make  
 Of none effect her oracle. To this  
 Not Menelaus, my child, hath wrought my soul,  
 Nor to his will am I a slave ; but Greece,  
 For which will I, or will I not, perforce  
 Thee I must sacrifice : my weakness here  
 I feel, and must submit. In thee, my child,  
 What lies, and what in me, Greece should be free,  
 Nor should her sons beneath Barbarians bend,  
 Their nuptial beds to ruffian force a prey.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

CLYT. Alas, my child ! O strangers ! Wretched me,  
 How wretched in thy death ! Thy father flies thee ;  
 He flies, but dooms thee to the realms beneath.

IPH. My mother, O my mother ! Wretched me !

For both our fortunes, full of woe,  
 One strain, one mournful strain shall flow.  
 No more the gladsome light of day,  
 No more the bright sun's golden ray  
 Shall shine, ah me ! to cheer my child.  
 Ah me ! - Ye Phrygian forests wild,  
 Ye snow-clad mountains, rude that rise,  
 Mountains of Ida to the skies ;  
 Where Priam once his son unblest,  
 Far severed from his mother's breast,  
 Exposed, this Paris to destroy ;  
 Idæus thence they called the boy ;

The boy they called Idæus, known  
So named through all the Phrygian town.  
O that his son he ne'er had laid  
Where with their herds the herdsmen strayed,  
The fountains of the nymphs among,  
Where roll the lucid streams along,  
And the green mead profusely pours  
The blushing glow of roseate flowers,  
With hyacinths of dusky hue,  
For goddesses which lovely grew.  
Once Pallas came to those sweet glades,  
And Juno deigned to grace their shades,  
And Venus fraught with wanton wiles,  
Resistless with enchanting smiles,  
And Hermes, messenger of Jove.  
Venus in all the sweets of love  
Rejoicing, Pallas in her spear,  
And proud the bed of Jove to share,  
Juno's bright form, imperial dame,  
Once to the odious judgment came :  
For beauty and for beauty's prize  
This contest drew them from the skies,  
But death on me : yet Greece shall own  
My death assures her high renown.

CHOR. Diana hath accepted thee the first  
Of victims, that our arms may sail to Troy.

IPH. But he, to whom my birth I owe,  
Betrays and flies me 'midst my woe.  
My mother ! Ah my cruel fate !  
He flies, and leaves me desolate.  
Ill-omened Helena, thy love  
Fatal, will fatal to me prove :  
I die, I perish, I am slain,  
My blood th' unhallowed sword shall stain ;  
Unhallowed is my father's hand,  
That pours it on th' empurpled sand.  
O, had the ships ne'er ploughed their way  
To Aulis, to this winding bay !  
O, had Jove given the fleet to bear

To 'Troy's proud shores the wafted war ;  
 Not adverse winds, that sullen sweep  
 Across Eubœa's angry deep !  
 To some he grants the fav'ring gales  
 That wanton in their flying sails ;  
 Necessity to some and pain ;  
 To some to cut the azure main ;  
 These quit the port with gallant pride,  
 Reluctant those at anchor ride.  
 To suff'rings born the human race,  
 In suff'rings pass life's little space :  
 Why since misfortunes 'round them wait,  
 Should men invite their cruel fate ?

CHOR. Alas, what woes, what miseries hath thou brought,  
 Daughter of Tyndarus, on Greece ! But thee,  
 Unhappy virgin, by this flood of ills  
 O'erwhelmed I wail. Ah, were this fate not thine !

IPH. My mother, what a crowd of men I see  
 Advance !

CLYT. The son of Thetis with them comes,  
 For whom, my child, I led thee to this strand.

IPH. Open the doors to me, ye female train,  
 That I may hide myself.

CLYT. Whom dost thou fly ?

IPH. Achilles, whom I blush to see.

CLYT. And why ?

IPH. These ill-starred nuptials cover me with shame.

CLYT. Nothing of pleasure doth thy state present.  
 Yet stay : this is no time for grave reserve.

ACHILLES, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

ACH. Daughter of Leda, O unhappy queen !

CLYT. Thy voice speaks nothing false.

ACH. Among the Greeks  
 Dreadful the clamour.

CLYT. What the clamour ? Say.

ACH. Touching thy daughter.

CLYT. Thou hast said what bears  
 No happy omen.

- ACH. That she must be slain  
A victim.  
CLYT. And doth none against this speak?  
ACH. I was with outrage threatened.  
CLYT. Stranger, how?  
ACH. To be o'erwhelmed with stones.  
CLYT. Whilst thou wouldst save  
My child?  
ACH. E'en so.  
CLYT. Who dared to touch thee?  
ACH. All  
The Grecians,  
CLYT. Were thy troops of Myrmidons  
Not present to thee?  
ACH. They were first in rage.  
CLYT. Then are we lost, my child.  
ACH. They cried aloud  
That I was vanquished by a woman.  
CLYT. Aught  
Didst thou reply?  
ACH. That her, who was to be  
My bride, they should not slay.  
CLYT. With justice urged.  
ACH. Named by her father mine.  
CLYT. From Argos brought  
By his command.  
ACH. In vain : I was o'erpowered  
By their rude cries.  
CLYT. The many are indeed  
A dreadful ill.  
ACH. Yet I will give thee aid.  
CLYT. Wilt thou alone fight with a host?  
ACH. Thou seest  
These bearing arms.  
CLYT. May thy designs succeed!  
ACH. They shall succeed.  
CLYT. Shall not my child be slain?  
ACH. Never by my permission.  
CLYT. Will none come  
To lay rude hands upon the virgin?

- ACH. Many :  
Ulysses with them ; he will lead her.
- CLYT. What,  
He of the race of Sisypheus ?
- ACH. The same.
- CLYT. Comes he of his free will, or by the host  
Appointed ?
- ACH. Chosen, by his own consent.
- CLYT. Bad choice, to be with blood polluted.
- ACH. Him  
Will I keep from her.
- CLYT. Would he drag her hence  
Against her will ?
- ACH. E'en by her golden locks.
- CLYT. What now behoves me do ?
- ACH. Be firm, and hold  
Thy daughter back.
- CLYT. And shall she not be slain  
For that ?
- ACH. But he will surely come for this.
- IPH. My mother, hear ye now my words : for thee  
Offended with thy husband I behold.  
Vain anger ! for where force will take its way,  
To struggle is not easy. Our warm thanks  
Are to this stranger for his prompt goodwill  
Most justly due : yet, it behoves thee, see  
Thou art not by the army charged with blame ;  
Nothing the more should we avail, on him  
Mischief would fall. Hear then what to my mind  
Deliberate thought presents. It is decreed  
For me to die : this then I wish, to die  
With glory, all reluctance banished far.  
My mother, weigh this well, that what I speak  
Is honour's dictate. All the powers of Greece  
Have now their eyes on me ; on me depends  
The sailing of the fleet, the fall of Troy,  
And not to suffer, should a new attempt  
Be dared, the rude Barbarians from blest Greece  
To bear in future times her dames by force,

This ruin bursting on them for the loss  
 Of Helena, whom Paris bore away.  
 By dying all these things shall I achieve,  
 And blest, for that I have delivered Greece,  
 Shall be my fame. To be too fond of life  
 Becomes not me ; nor for thyself alone,  
 But to all Greece a blessing, didst thou bear me.  
 Shall thousands, when their country's injured, lift  
 Their shields, shall thousands grasp the oar, and dare,  
 Advancing bravely 'gainst the foe, to die  
 For Greece ? And shall my life, my single life,  
 Obstruct all this ? Would this be just ? What word  
 Can we reply ? Nay more ; it is not right  
 That he with all the Grecians should contend  
 In fight, should die, and for a woman. No ;  
 More than a thousand women is one man  
 Worthy to see the light of life. If me  
 The chaste Diana wills t' accept, shall I,  
 A mortal, dare oppose her heavenly will ?  
 Vain the attempt : for Greece I give my life.  
 Slay me, demolish Troy : for these shall be  
 Long time my monuments, my children these,  
 My nuptials, and my glory. It is meet  
 That Greece should o'er Barbarians bear the sway,  
 Not that Barbarians lord it over Greece :  
 Nature hath formed them slaves, the Grecians free.

CHOR. Thine, royal virgin, is a generous part :  
 But harsh what Fortune and the Goddess wills.

ACH. Daughter of Agamemnon, highly blest  
 Some god would make me, if I might attain  
 Thy nuptials. Greece in thee I happy deem,  
 And thee in Greece. This hast thou nobly spoken,  
 And worthy of thy country : to contend  
 Against a goddess of superior power  
 Desisting, thou hast judged the public good  
 A better, nay, a necessary part.  
 For this more ardent my desire to gain thee  
 My bride, this disposition when I see,  
 For it is generous. But consider well :

To do thee good, to lead thee to my house,  
Is my warm wish ; and much I should be grieved,  
Be witness Thetis, if I save thee not  
In arms against the Grecians. In thy thought  
Revolve this well : death is a dreadful thing.

IPH. Reflecting not on any this I speak,  
Enough of wars and slaughters from the charms  
Of Helen rise : but die not thou for me,  
O stranger, nor distain thy sword with blood ;  
But let me save my country, if I may.

ACH. O glorious spirit ! Nought have I 'gainst this  
To urge, since such thy will ; for what thou sayst  
Is generous : why should not the truth be spoken ?  
But of thy purpose thou mayst yet repent.  
Know then my resolution : I will go,  
And nigh the altar place these arms, thy death  
Preventing, not permitting : thou perchance  
Mayst soon approve my purpose, nigh thy throat  
When thou shalt see the sword : and for that cause  
I will not, for a rash unweighed resolve,  
Abandon thee to die ; but with these arms  
Wait near Diana's temple till thou come.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

IPH. Why, mother, dost thou shed these silent tears ?

CLYT. I have a cruel cause, that rends my heart.

IPH. Forbear, nor sink my spirit. Grant me this.

CLYT. Say what : by me my child shall ne'er be wronged.

IPH. Clip not those crisped tresses from thine head,  
Nor robe thee in the sable garb of woe.

CLYT. What hast thou said, my child ? When thou art  
lost——

IPH. Not lost, but saved : through me thou shalt be famed.

CLYT. What, for thy death shall I not mourn, my child ?

IPH. No, since for me a tomb shall not be raised.

CLYT. To die then, is not that to be entombed ?

IPH. The altar of the goddess is my tomb.

CLYT. Well dost thou speak, my child : I will comply.

IPH. And deem me blest, as working good to Greece.



CLYT. What message to thy sisters shall I bear?

IPH. Them too array not in the garbs of woe.

CLYT. What greetings to the virgins dost thou send?

IPH. My last farewell. To manhood train Orestes.

CLYT. Embrace him, for thou ne'er shalt see him more.

IPH. Far as thou couldst, thou didst assist thy friends.

[*To Orestes.*]

CLYT. At Argos can I do aught pleasing to thee?

IPH. My father, and thy husband, do not hate.

CLYT. For thy dear sake fierce contests must he bear.

IPH. For Greece, reluctant, me to death he yields.

CLYT. Basely, with guile, unworthy Atreus' son.

IPH. Who goes with me, and leads me, by the hair

Ere I am dragged?

CLYT. I will go with thee.

IPH. No:

That were unseemly.

CLYT. Hanging on thy robes.

IPH. Let me prevail, my mother; stay. To me

As more becoming this, and more to thee.

Let one of these, th' attendants of my father,

Conduct me to Diana's hallowed mead,

Where I shall fall a victim.

CLYT. O my child,

Dost thou then go?

IPH. And never to return.

CLYT. And wilt thou leave thy mother?

IPH. As thou seest,

Not as I merit.

CLYT. Stay, forsake me not.

IPH. I suffer not a tear to fall. But you,

Ye virgins, to my fate attune the hymn,

"Diana, daughter of almighty Jove."

With fav'ring omens sing "Success to Greece."

Come, with the basket one begin the rites,

One with the purifying cakes the flames

Enkindle; let my father his right hand

Place on the altar; for I come to give

Safety to Greece, and conquest to her arms.

Lead me : mine the glorious fate  
 To o'erturn the Phrygian state ;  
 Ilium's towers their head shall bow.  
 With the garlands bind my brow,  
 Bring them, be these tresses crowned.  
 Round the shrine, the altar round  
 Bear the lavers, which you fill  
 From the pure translucent rill.  
 High your choral voices raise,  
 Tuned to hymn Diana's praise,  
 Blest Diana, royal maid.  
 Since the fates demand my aid,  
 I fulfil their awful power  
 By my slaughter, by my gore.

CHOR. Reverenced, reverenced mother, now  
 Thus for thee our tears shall flow ;  
 For unhallowed would a tear  
 'Midst the solemn rites appear.

IPH. Swell the notes, ye virgin train,  
 To Diana swell the strain.  
 Queen of Chalcis, adverse land,  
 Queen of Aulis, on whose strand,  
 Winding to a narrow bay,  
 Fierce to take its angry way  
 Waits the war, and calls on me  
 Its retarded force to free.  
 O my country, where these eyes  
 Opened on Pelasgic skies !  
 O ye virgins, once my pride,  
 In Mycenæ who reside !

CHOR. Why of Perseus name the town,  
 Which Cyclopean rampires crown ?

IPH. Me you reared a beam of light :  
 Freely now I sink in night.

CHOR. And for this immortal fame,  
 Virgin, shall attend thy name.

IPH. Ah, thou beaming lamp of day,  
 Jove-born, bright, ethereal ray,  
 Other regions me await,  
 Other life, and other fate !

Farewell, beauteous lamp of day,

Farewell, bright ethereal ray !

CHOR. See, she goes : her glorious fate  
To o'erturn the Phrygian state ;  
Soon the wreaths shall bind her brow ;  
Soon the lustral waters flow ;  
Soon that beauteous neck shall feel  
Piercing deep the fatal steel,  
And the ruthless altar o'er  
Sprinkle drops of gushing gore.  
By thy father's dread command  
There the cleansing lavers stand ;  
There in arms the Grecian powers  
Burn to march 'gainst Ilium's towers.  
But our voices let us raise,  
Tuned to hymn Diana's praise,  
Virgin daughter she of Jove,  
Queen among the gods above.  
That with conquest and renown  
She the arms of Greece may crown.

To thee, dread power, we make our vows,  
Pleased when the blood of human victims flows.

To Phrygia's hostile strand,  
Where rise perfidious Ilium's hated towers,  
Waft, O waft the Grecian powers,  
And aid this martial band !  
On Agamemnon's honoured head,  
Whilst wide the spears of Greece their terrors spread,  
Th' immortal crown let conquest place,  
With glory's brightest grace.

MESSENGER, CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

MESS. O royal Clytemnestra, from the house  
Hither advance, that thou mayst hear my words.

CLYT. Hearing thy voice I come, but with affright  
And terror trembling, lest thy coming bring  
Tidings of other woes, beyond what now  
Afflict me.

MESS. Of thy daughter have I things  
Astonishing and awful to relate.

CLYT. Delay not then, but speak them instantly.

MESS. Yes, honoured lady, thou shalt hear them all  
Distinct from first to last, if that my sense  
Disordered be not faithless to my tongue.  
When to Diana's grove and flow'ry meads  
We came, where stood th' assembled host of Greece,  
Leading thy daughter, straight in close array  
Was formed the band of Argives; but the chief  
Imperial Agamemnon, when he saw  
His daughter as a victim to the grove  
Advancing, groaned, and bursting into tears  
Turned from the sight his head, before his eyes  
Holding his robe. The virgin near him stood,  
And thus addressed him: "Father, I to thee  
Am present: for my country, and for all  
The land of Greece, I freely give myself  
A victim: to the altar let them lead me,  
Since such the oracle. If aught on me  
Depends, be happy, and attain the prize  
Of glorious conquest, and revisit safe  
Your country: of the Grecians for this cause  
Let no one touch me; with intrepid spirit  
Silent will I present my neck." She spoke,  
And all that heard admired the noble soul  
And virtue of the virgin. In the midst  
Talthybius standing, such his charge, proclaimed  
Silence to all the host: and Chalcas now,  
The prophet, in the golden basket placed  
Drawn from its sheath the sharp-edged sword, and bound  
The sacred garlands round the virgin's head.  
The son of Peleus, holding in his hands  
The basket and the laver, circled round  
The altar of the goddess, and thus spoke:  
"Daughter of Jove, Diana, in the chase  
Of savage beasts delighting, through the night  
Who rollest thy resplendent orb, accept  
This victim, which th' associate troops of Greece,  
And Agamemnon, our imperial chief,  
Present to thee, the unpolluted blood

Now from this beauteous virgin's neck to flow.  
Grant that secure our fleets may plough the main,  
And that our arms may lay the rampired walls  
Of Troy in dust." The sons of Atreus stood,  
And all the host fixed on the ground their eyes.  
The priest then took the sword, preferred his prayer,  
And with his eye marked where to give the blow.  
My heart with grief sunk in me, on the earth  
Mine eyes were cast; when sudden to the view  
A wonder! For the stroke each clearly heard,  
But where the virgin was none knew. Aloud  
The priest exclaims, and all the host with shouts  
Rifted the air, beholding from some god  
A prodigy, which struck their wond'ring eyes,  
Surpassing faith when seen: for on the ground  
Panting was laid a hind of largest bulk,  
In form excelling; with its spouting blood  
Much was the altar of the goddess dewed.  
Calchas at this, think with what joy, exclaimed:  
"Ye leaders of th' united host of Greece,  
See you this victim, by the goddess brought,  
And at her altar laid, a mountain hind?  
This, rather than the virgin, she accepts,  
Not with the rich stream of her noble blood  
To stain the altar; this she hath received  
Of her free grace, and gives a fav'ring gale  
To swell our sails, and bear th' invading war  
To Ilium: therefore rouse, ye naval train,  
Your courage. To your ships! for we this day,  
Leaving the deep recesses of this shore,  
Must pass th' Ægean sea." Soon as the flames  
The victim had consumed, he poured a prayer,  
That o'er the waves the host might plough their way.  
Me Agamemnon sends, that I should bear  
To thee these tidings, and declare what fate  
The gods assign him, and through Greece t' obtain  
Immortal glory. What I now relate  
I saw, for I was present; to the gods  
Thy daughter, be thou well assured, is fled.

Therefore lament no more, no more retain  
Thy anger 'gainst thy lord : to mortal men  
Things unexpected oft the gods dispense,  
And whom they love they save : this day hath seen  
Thy daughter dead, seen her alive again.

CHOR. His tidings with what transport do I hear !  
Thy daughter lives, and lives among the gods.

CLYT. And have the gods, my daughter, borne thee hence?  
How then shall I address thee ? Or of this  
How deem ! Vain words, perchance, to comfort me  
And soothe to peace the anguish of my soul.

MESS. But Agamemnon comes, and will confirm  
Each circumstance which thou hast heard from me.

AGAM. Lady, we have much cause to think ourselves,  
Touching our daughter, blest : for 'mongst the gods  
Commercing she in truth resides. But thee  
Behoves it with thine infant son return  
To Argos, for the troops with ardour haste  
To sail. And now farewell ! My greetings to thee  
From Troy will be unfrequent, and at times  
Of distant interval : mayst thou be blest !

CHOR. With joy, Atrides, reach the Phrygian shore ;  
With joy return to Greece, and bring with thee  
Bright conquest, and the glorious spoils of Troy !

## IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

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THE reader will doubtless be pleased at renewing his acquaintance with the amiable but unhappy Iphigenia : from the altar of Diana at Aulis she was removed by that goddess to her temple in the Tauric Chersonese, a great Peninsula in the Black Sea on the Mæotic Lake, now called Crim Tartary, where she presided as priestess over the cruel and bloody rites there established.

Diodorus Siculus, lib. iv., informs us, " that it was the custom of the Barbarians who inhabited that country to sacrifice such strangers as were driven on that shore to the Tauric Diana. Iphigenia, they say, was in after times appointed the priestess of this goddess, and sacrificed such strangers as were taken. In tracing the history of these sacrifices we find that the Sun was father of Æetes and Perses : Æetes reigned at Colchis, Perses in the Tauric Chersonese, both remarkable for their savage cruelty. Hecate was the daughter of Perses, and exceeded her father in daring and atrocious actions : she took great delight in hunting, and when she failed of success in the chase, transfixing men with her arrows, instead of beasts. She was fond of preparing compositions of a poisonous nature, to try the force of which she mixed them with the food given to strangers. Having acquired great experience in these things, she destroyed her father with poison, and took possession of his kingdom : she then built the temple of Diana, and appointed that the strangers who arrived there should be sacrificed to the goddess : hence her name became terrible for her barbarity. She afterwards married Æetes, and was by him the mother of

Circe and Medea." Iphigenia had for some years, reluctantly indeed, but through necessity, presided over these inhuman rites, when Orestes, with his friend Pylades, arrived on this inhospitable coast, in obedience to the oracle of Apollo: they were seized, and carried to the king, who sent them in chains to the priestess as victims to the goddess: their death now seemed inevitable. The drama is conducted with exquisite skill, and the circumstances arise out of each other so naturally, that, as P. Brumoy well observes, the piece has such an air of truth, that the spectator is persuaded that the event really passed as it is presented to him, and that it could not have passed in any other manner.

The translator feels himself in a very unpleasant situation with regard to this tragedy: the justly approved translation of the late excellent Mr. West rendered his attempt unnecessary: he had no ambition to rival that gentleman, nor has he the vanity to hope for any superiority in the execution of the work: but the respect due to his subscribers and to the public obliged him to present them with *all* the tragedies of Euripides, though at the hazard of his reputation in this particular instance, where *non vinci optimus est triumphus*.

The scene is in the Court of the Temple of Diana.

#### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

IPHIGENIA.

ORESTES.

PYLADES.

THOAS.

HERDSMAN.

MESSENGER.

CHORUS OF GRECIAN WOMEN,

CAPTIVES, ATTENDANTS ON

IPHIGENIA IN THE TEMPLE.

#### IPHIGENIA.

To Pisa by the fleetest coursers borne  
Comes Pelops, son of Tantalus, and weds  
The virgin daughter of Cœnomaus:  
From her sprung Atreus; Menelaus from him,



And Agamemnon ; I from him derive  
 My birth, his Iphigenia, by his queen  
 Daughter of Tyndarus. Where frequent winds  
 Swell the vext Euripus with eddying blasts.  
 And roll the dark'ning waves, my father slew me  
 A victim to Diana, so he thought,  
 For Helen's sake, its bay where Aulis winds  
 To fame well known, for there his thousand ships,  
 Th' armament of Greece, th' imperial chief  
 Convened, desirous that his Greeks should snatch  
 The glorious crown of victory from Troy,  
 And punish the base insult to the bed  
 Of Helen, vengeance grateful to the soul  
 Of Menelaus. But 'gainst his ships the sea  
 Long barred, and not one favouring breeze to swell  
 His flagging sails, the hallowed flames the chief  
 Consults, and Calchas thus disclosed the fates :  
 " Imperial leader of the Grecian host,  
 Hence shalt thou not unmoor thy vessels ere  
 Diana as a victim shall receive  
 Thy daughter Iphigenia. What the year  
 Most beauteous should produce, thou to the queen  
 Dispensing, light didst vow to sacrifice :  
 A daughter, Clytemnestra in thy house  
 Then 'ere (the peerless grace of beauty thus  
 To me assigning) : her must thou devote  
 The victim." Then Ulysses by his arts  
 Me to Achilles as designed a bride,  
 He on from my mother. My unhappy fate  
 To Aulis brought me ; on the altar there  
 High was I placed, and o'er me gleamed the sword  
 Aiming the fatal wound : but from the stroke  
 Diana snatched me, in exchange a hind  
 Giving the Grecians ; through the lucid air  
 Me she conveyed to Tauris, here to dwell,  
 Where o'er barbarians a barbaric king  
 Holds his rude sway, named Thoas, whose swift foot  
 Equals the rapid wing : me he appoints  
 The priestess of this temple, where such rites

Are pleasing to Diana, that the name  
 Alone claims honour ; for I sacrifice  
 (Such, ere I came, the custom of the state)  
 Whatever Grecian to this savage shore  
 Is driven. The previous rites are mine ; the deed  
 Of blood, too horrid to be told, devolves  
 On others in the temple ; but the rest,  
 In reverence to the goddess, I forbear.  
 But the strange visions, which the night now past  
 Brought with it, to the air, if that may soothe  
 My troubled thought, I will relate. I seemed,  
 As I lay sleeping, from this land removed  
 To dwell at Argos, resting on my couch  
 'Midst the apartments of the virgin train.  
 Sudden the firm earth shook ; I fled, and stood  
 Without ; the battlements I saw, and all  
 The rocking roof fall from its lofty height  
 In ruins to the ground ; of all the house,  
 My father's house, one pillar, as I thought,  
 Alone was left, which from its cornice waved  
 A length of auburn-locks, and human voice  
 Assumed. The bloody office, which is mine  
 To strangers here, respecting, I to death,  
 Sprinkling the lustral drops, devoted it  
 With many tears. My dream I thus expound  
 Orestes, whom I hallowed by my rites,  
 Is dead : for sons are pillars of the house,  
 They, whom my lustral lavers sprinkle, die.  
 I cannot to my friends apply my dream,  
 For Strophius, when I perished, had no son.  
 Now to my brother, absent though he be,  
 Libations will I offer ; this at least,  
 With the attendants given me by the king,  
 Virgins of Greece, I can : but what the cause  
 They yet attend me not within the house,  
 The temple of the goddess where I dwell ?

NT

11

ORESTES, PYLADES.

ORES. Keep careful watch, lest some one come this way.

PYL. I watch, and turn mine eye to every part.

ORES. And dost thou, Pylades, imagine this

The temple of the goddess which we seek,

Our sails from Argos sweeping o'er the main?

PYL. Orestes, such my thought, and must be thine.

ORES. And this the altar wet with Grecian blood?

PYL. Crimsoned with gore behold its sculptured wreaths.

ORES. See, from the battlements what trophies hang!

PYL. The spoils of strangers that have here been slain.

ORES. Behoves us then to watch with careful eye,

O Phœbus, by thy oracles again

Why hast thou led me to these toils? E'er since

In vengeance for my father's blood I slew

My mother, ceaseless by the Furies driven,

Vagrant, an outcast, many a bending course

My feet have trod: to thee I came, of thee

Inquired this whirling frenzy by what means,

And by what means my labours I might end.

Thy voice commanded me to speed my course

To this wild coast of Tauris, where a shrine

Thy sister hath, Diana; thence to take

The statue of the goddess, which from heaven,

So say the natives, to this temple fell:

This image or by fraud or fortune won,

The dangerous toil achieved, to place the prize

In the Athenian land: no more was said;

But that performing this I should obtain

Rest from my toils. Obedient to thy words

On this unknown, unhospitable coast

Am I arrived. Now, Pylades, for thou

Art my associate in this dangerous task,

Of thee I ask, What shall we do? for high

The walls, thou seest, which fence the temple round:

Shall we ascend their height? But how escape

Observing eyes? Or burst the brazen bars?

Of these we nothing know. In the attempt

To force the gates, or meditating means  
To enter, if detected, we shall die.  
Shall we then, ere we die, by flight regain  
The ship, in which we hither ploughed the sea?

PYL. Of flight we brook no thought, nor such hath been  
Our wont; nor may the god's commanding voice  
Be disobeyed: but from the temple now  
Retiring, in some cave, which the black sea  
Beats with its billows, we may lie concealed  
At distance from our bark, lest some, whose eyes  
May note it, bear the tidings to the king,  
And we be seized by force. But when the eye  
Of night comes darkling on, then must we dare,  
And take the polished image from the shrine,  
Attempting all things: and the vacant space  
Between the triglyphs, mark it well, enough  
Is open to admit us; by that way  
Attempt we to descend. In toils the brave  
Are daring; of no worth the abject soul.

ORES. This length of sea we ploughed not from this coast,  
Nothing effected, to return: but well  
Hast thou advised; the god must be obeyed.  
Retire we then where we may lie concealed:  
For never from the god will come the cause  
That what his sacred voice commands should fall  
Effectless. We must dare. No toil to youth  
Excuse, which justifies inaction, brings.

IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

IPH. You, who your savage dwellings hold  
Nigh this inhospitable main,  
'Gainst clashing rocks with fury rolled,  
From all but hallowed words abstain.  
Virgin queen, Latona's grace,  
Joying in the mountain chase,  
To thy court, thy rich domain,  
To thy beauteous-pillared fane,  
Where our wond'ring eyes behold  
Battlements that blaze with gold,

Thus my virgin steps I bend,  
 Holy, the holy to attend,  
 Servant, virgin queen, to thee,  
 Power, who bearest life's golden key,  
 Far from Greece for steeds renowned,  
 From her walls with towers crowned,  
 From the beauteous-planted meads  
 Where his train Eurotas leads,  
 Visiting the loved retreats  
 Once my royal father's seats.

CHOR. I come. What cares disturb thy rest?  
 Why hast thou brought me to the shrine?  
 Doth some fresh grief afflict thy breast?  
 Why bring me to this seat divine?  
 Thou daughter of that chief, whose powers  
 Ploughed with a thousand keels the strand,  
 And ranged in arms shook Troy's proud towers  
 Beneath th' Atridæ's great command!

IPH. O ye attendant train,  
 How is my heart oppressed with woe!  
 What notes, save notes of grief, can flow,  
 A harsh and unmelodious strain?  
 My soul domestic ills oppress with dread,  
 And bid me mourn a brother dead.  
 What visions did my sleeping sense appal  
 In the past dark and midnight hour?  
 'Tis ruin, ruin all.  
 My father's house—it is no more;  
 No more is his illustrious line.  
 What dreadful deeds hath Argos known!  
 One only brother, Fate, was mine;  
 And dost thou rend him from me? Is he gone  
 To Pluto's dreary realms below?  
 For him, as dead, with pious care  
 This goblet I prepare;  
 And on the bosom of the earth shall flow  
 Streams from the heifer mountain-bred,  
 The grape's rich juice, and mixed with these  
 The labour of the yellow bees,  
 Libations soothing to the dead.

Give me th' oblation ; let me hold  
The foaming goblet's hallowed gold.

O thou, the earth beneath,  
Who didst from Agamemnon spring,  
To thee deprived of vital breath  
I these libations bring.  
Accept them : to thy honoured tomb  
Never, ah ! never shall I come ;  
Never these golden tresses bear  
To place them there, there shed the tear :  
For from my country far, a hind  
There deemed as slain, my wild abode I find.

CHOR. To thee thy faithful train  
The Asiatic hymn will raise,  
A doleful, a barbaric strain,  
Responsive to thy lays,  
And steep in tears the mournful song,  
Notes which to the dead belong,  
Dismal notes attuned to woe  
By Pluto in the realms below :  
No sprightly air shall we employ  
To cheer the soul, and wake the sense of joy.

IPH. Th' Atridæ are no more :  
Extinct their sceptre's golden light ;  
My father's house from its proud height  
Is fall'n : its ruins I deplore.  
Who of her kings at Argos holds his reign,  
Her kings once blest ? But Sorrow's train  
Rolls on impetuous for the rapid steeds  
Which o'er the strand with Pelops fly.  
From what atrocious deeds  
Starts the sun back, his sacred eye  
Of brightness, loathing, turned aside ?  
And fatal to their house arose  
From the rich Ram, Thessalia's golden pride,  
Slaughter on slaughter, woes on woes.  
Thence from the dead of ages past  
Vengeance came rushing on its prey,

And swept the race of Tantalus away :  
Fatal to thee its ruthless haste ;  
To me too fatal from the hour  
My mother wedded, from the night  
She gave me to life's opening light,  
Nursed by affliction's cruel power.  
Early to me the fates unkind  
To know what sorrow is assigned ;  
Me, Leda's daughter, hapless dame,  
First blooming offspring of her bed  
(A father's conduct here I blame),  
A joyless victim bred ;  
When o'er the strand of Aulis, in the pride  
Of beauty kindling flames of love,  
High on my splendid car I move,  
Betrothed to Thetis' son a bride :  
Ah hapless bride, to all the train  
Of Grecian fair preferred in vain !  
But now a stranger on this strand,  
'Gainst which the wild waves beat,  
I hold my dreary, joyless seat,  
Far distant from my native land ;  
Nor nuptial bed is mine, nor child, nor friend.  
At Argos now no more I raise  
The festal song in Juno's praise ;  
Nor o'er the loom sweet-sounding bend,  
As the creative shuttle flies,  
Give forms of Titans fierce to rise,  
And dreadful with her purple spear  
Image Athenian Pallas there.  
But on this barb'rous shore  
Th' unhappy stranger's fate I moan,  
The ruthless altar stained with gore,  
His deep and dying groan :  
And for each tear that weeps his woes,  
From me a tear of pity flows.  
Of these the sad remembrance now must sleep :  
A brother dead, ah me ! I weep :  
At Argos him by fate opprest

I left an infant at the breast.  
 A beauteous bud, whose opening charms  
 Then blossomed in his mother's arms,  
 Orestes, born to high command,  
 Th' imperial sceptre of the Argive land.

CHOR. Leaving the sea-washed shore a herdsman comes  
 Speeding, with some fresh tidings to thee fraught.

HERDSMAN, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

HERD. Daughter of Agamemnon, and bright gem  
 Of Clytemnestra, hear strange things from me.

IPH. And what of terror doth thy tale import?

HERD. Two youths, swift-rowing 'twixt the clashing rocks  
 Of our wild sea, are landed on the beach;  
 A grateful offering at Diana's shrine,  
 And victims to the goddess. Haste, prepare  
 The sacred lavers and the previous rites.

IPH. Whence are the strangers? from what country named?

HERD. From Greece: this only, nothing more, I know.

IPH. Didst thou not hear what names the strangers bear?

HERD. One by the other was called Pylades.

IPH. How is the stranger, his companion, named?

HERD. This none of us can tell: we heard it not.

IPH. How saw you them? how seized them? by what chance?

HERD. 'Midst the rude cliffs that o'er the Euxine hang——

IPH. And what concern have herdsmen with the sea?

HERD. To wash our herds in the salt wave we came.

IPH. To what I asked return: how seized you them?  
 Tell me the manner; this I wish to know.

For slow the victims come, nor hath some while  
 The altar of the goddess, as was wont,  
 Been crimsoned with the streams of Grecian blood.

HERD. Our herds, which in the forests feed, we drove  
 Amidst the tide that rushes to the shore  
 'Twixt the Symplegades: it was the place  
 Where in the rifted rock the chafing surge  
 Hath hollowed a rude cave, the haunt of those  
 Whose quest is purple. Of our number there  
 A herdsman saw two youths, and back returned



With soft and silent step ; then pointing said,  
 " Do you not see them ? These are deities  
 That sit there." One, who with religious awe  
 Revered the gods, with hands uplifted prayed,  
 His eyes fixed on them : " Son of the sea-nymph  
 Leucothoe, guardian of the lab'ring bark,  
 Our Lord Palæmon, be propitious to us !  
 Or sit you on our shores, bright sons of Jove,  
 Castor and Pollux ! Or the glorious boast  
 Of Nereus, father of the noble choir  
 O fifty Nereids ?" One, whose untaught mind  
 Audacious folly hardened 'gainst the sense  
 Of holy awe, scoffed at his prayers, and said :  
 " These are wrecked mariners, that take their seat  
 In the cleft rock through fear, as they have heard  
 Our prescribed rite, that here we sacrifice  
 The stranger." To the greater part he seemed  
 Well to have spoken, and we judged it meet  
 To seize the victims, by our country's law  
 Due to the goddess. Of the stranger youths  
 One at this instant started from the rock ;  
 Awhile he stood, and wildly tossed his head,  
 And groaned, his loose arms trembling all their length,  
 Convulsed with madness : as a hunter loud  
 Then cried : " Dost thou behold her, Pylades,  
 Dost thou not see this dragon fierce from hell  
 Rushing to kill me, and against me rousing  
 Her horrid vipers ? See this other here,  
 Emitting fire and slaughter from her vests,  
 Sails on her wings, my mother in her arms  
 Bearing, to hurl this mass of rock upon me !  
 Ah, she will kill me ! Whither shall I fly ? "  
 His visage might we see no more the same,  
 And his voice varied, now the roar of bulls,  
 The howl of dogs now uttering, mimic sounds  
 Sent by the madd'ning Furies, as they say.  
 Together thronging, as of death assured,  
 We sit in silence : but he drew his sword,  
 And like a lion rushing 'midst our herds

Plunged in their sides the weapon, weening thus  
To drive the Furies, till the briny wave  
Foamed with their blood. But when among our herds  
We saw this havoc made, we all 'gan rouse  
To arms, and blew our sounding shells t' alarm  
The neighb'ring peasants ; for we thought in fight  
Rude herdsmen to these youthful strangers, trained  
To arms, ill matched ; and forthwith to our aid  
Flocked numbers. But, his frenzy of its force  
Abating, on the earth the stranger falls,  
Foam bursting from his mouth ? But when we saw  
Th' advantage, each adventured on, and hurled  
What might annoy him fall'n : the other youth  
Wiped off the foam, took of his person care,  
His fine-wrought robe spread over him, with heed  
The flying stones observing warded off  
The wounds, and each kind office to his friend  
Attentively performed. His sense returned,  
The stranger started up, and soon perceived  
The tide of foes that rolled impetuous on,  
The danger and distress that closed them round.  
He heaved a sigh An unremitting storm  
Of stones we poured, and each incited each.  
Then we his dreadful exhortation heard :  
" Pylades, we shall die ; but let us die  
With glory ; draw thy sword, and follow me."  
But when we saw the enemies advance  
With brandished swords, the steep heights crowned with wood,  
We fill in flight : but others, if one flies,  
Press on them ; if again they drive these back,  
What before fled turns, with a storm of stones  
Assaulting them ; but, what exceeds belief,  
Hurled by a thousand hands not one could hit  
The victims of the goddess : scarce at length,  
Not by brave daring seized we them, but 'round  
We closed upon them, and their swords with stones  
Beat, wily, from their hands, for on their knees  
They through fatigue had sunk upon the ground.  
We bare them to the monarch of this land :

He viewed them, and without delay to thee  
Sent them, devoted to the cleansing vase  
And to the altar. Victims such as these,  
O virgin, wish to find ; for if such youths  
Thou offer, for thy slaughter Greece will pay,  
Her wrongs to thee at Aulis well avenged.

CHOR. These things are wonderful, which thou hast told  
Of him, whoe'er he be, the youth from Greece  
Arrived on this unhospitable shore.

IPH. 'Tis well. Go thou, and bring the strangers hither.  
What here is to be done shall be our care.  
O my unhappy heart ! before this hour  
To strangers thou wast gentle, always touched  
With pity, and with tears their tears repaid,  
When Grecians, natives of my country, came  
Into my hands : but from the dreams, which prompt  
To deeds ungentle, showing that no more  
Orestes views the sun's fair light, whoe'er  
Ye are that hither come, me will you find  
Relentless now. This is the truth, my friends :  
My heart is rent ; and never will the wretch,  
Who feels affliction's cruel tortures, bear  
Goodwill to those that are more fortunate.  
Never came gale from Jove, nor flying bark,  
Which 'twixt the dang'rous rocks of th' Euxine sea  
Brought Helen hither, who my ruin wrought,  
Nor Menelaus ; that on them my foul wrongs  
I might repay, and with an Aulis here  
Requite the Aulis there, where I was seized,  
And, as a heifer, by the Grecians slain.  
My father too, who gave me birth, was priest.  
Ah me ! the sad remembrance of those ills  
Yet lives : how often did I stroke thy cheek,  
And, hanging on thy knees, address thee thus :  
Alas, my father ! I by thee am led  
A bride to bridal rites unblest and base :  
Them, whilst by thee I bleed, my mother hymns,  
And th' Argive dames, with hymeneal strains,  
And with the jocund pipe the house resounds :

But at the altar I by thee am slain ;  
 For Pluto was th' Achilles, not the son  
 Of Peleus, whom to me thou didst announce  
 Th' affianced bridegroom, and by guile didst bring  
 To bloody nuptials in the rolling car.  
 But, o'er mine eyes the veil's fine texture spread,  
 This brother in my hands, who now is lost,  
 I clasped not, though his sister, did not press  
 My lips to his through virgin modesty,  
 As going to the house of Peleus : then  
 Each fond embrace I to another time  
 Deferred, as soon to Argos to return.  
 If, O unhappy brother, thou art dead,  
 From what a state, thy father's envied height  
 Of glory, loved Orestes, art thou torn !—  
 These false rules of the goddess much I blame :  
 Whoe'er of mortals is with slaughter stained,  
 Or hath at childbirth given assisting hands,  
 Or chanced to touch aught dead, she as impure  
 Drives from her altars ; yet herself delights  
 In human victims bleeding at her shrine.  
 Ne'er did Latona, from th' embrace of Jove,  
 Bring forth such inconsistency : I then deem  
 The feast of Tantalus, where gods were guests,  
 Unworthy of belief, as that they fed  
 On his son's flesh delighted : and I think  
 These people, who themselves have a wild joy  
 In shedding human blood, their savage guilt  
 Charge on the goddess : for this truth I hold,  
 None of the gods is evil or doth wrong.

CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

Ye rocks, ye clashing rocks, whose brow  
 Frowns o'er the darkened deeps below,  
 Whose wild inhospitable wave,  
 From Argos flying and her native spring,  
 The virgin once was known to brave,  
 Tormented with the Bryze's madd'ning sting,

From Europe when the rude sea o'er  
 She passed to Asia's adverse shore ;  
 Who are these hapless youths, that dare to land,  
 Leaving those soft irriguous meads,  
 Where, his green margin fringed with reeds,  
 Eurotas rolls his ample tide,  
 Or Dirce's hallowed waters glide,  
 And touch this barb'rous, stranger-hating strand,  
 The altars where a virgin dew,  
 And blood the pillared shrine imbrues ?

*Strophe 2.*

Did they with oars impetuous sweep,  
 Rank answering rank, the foamy deep,  
 And wing their bark with flying sails,  
 To raise their humble fortune their desire,  
 Eager to catch the rising gales,  
 Their bosoms with the love of gain on fire ?  
 For sweet is Hope, to man's fond breast,  
 The hope of gain, insatiate guest,  
 Though on her o't attends Misfortune's train ;  
 For daring man she tempts to brave  
 The dangers of the boist'rous wave,  
 And leads him heedless of his fate  
 Through many a distant, barb'rous state ;  
 Vain his opinions, his pursuits are vain !  
 Boundless o'er some her power is shown,  
 But some her temp'rate influence own.

*Antistrophe 1.*

How did they pass the dang'rous rocks,  
 Clashing with rude, tremendous shocks ?  
 How pass the savage-howling shore  
 Where once th' unhappy Phineus held his reign,  
 And sleep affrighted flies its roar,  
 Steering their rough course o'er this boist'rous main,  
 Formed in a ring beneath whose waves  
 The Nereid train in high-arched caves

Weave the light dance, and raise the sprightly song,  
 Whilst whisp'ring in their swelling sails  
 Soft Zephyrs breathe, or southern gales  
 Piping amidst their tackling play,  
 As their bark ploughs its wat'ry way  
 Those hoary cliffs, the haunts of birds, along,  
 To that wild strand, the rapid race  
 Where once Achilles deigned to grace?

*Antistrophe 2.*

Oh that from Troy some chance would bear  
 Leda's loved daughter, fatal fair  
 (The royal virgin's vows are mine),  
 That her bright tresses rolled in crimson dew,  
 Her warm blood flowing at this shrine,  
 The altar of the goddess might imbrue,  
 And Vengeance, righteous to repay  
 Her former mischiefs, seize her prey!  
 But with what rapture should I hear his voice,  
 If one this shore should reach from Greece,  
 And bid the toils of slav'ry cease!  
 Or might I in the hour of rest  
 With pleasing dreams of Greece be blest,  
 So in my house, my native land rejoice,  
 In sleep enjoy the pleasing strain  
 For happiness restored again!

IPH. But the two youths, their hands fast bound in chains,  
 The late-seized victims to the goddess, come.  
 Silence, my friends: for destined at the shrine  
 To bleed the Grecian strangers near approach,  
 And no false tidings did the herdsman bring.

CHOR. Goddess revered, if grateful to thy soul  
 This state presents such sacrifice, accept  
 The victims, which the custom of this land  
 Gives thee, but deemed unholy by the Greeks.

IPHIGENIA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

IPH. No more ; that to the goddess each due rite  
Be well performed shall be my care. Unchain  
The strangers' hands, that, hallowed as they are,  
They may no more be bound. Go you, prepare  
Within the temple what the rites require.  
Unhappy youths, what mother brought you forth ?  
Your father who ? Your sister, if perchance  
Ye have a sister, of what youths deprived ?  
For brother she shall have no more. Who knows  
Whom such misfortunes may attend ? For dark  
What the gods will creeps on ; and none can tell  
The ills to come : this fortune from the sight  
Obscures. But, O unhappy strangers, say  
Whence came you ? Sailed you long since for this land ?  
But long will be your absence from your homes,  
For ever, in the dreary realms below.

ORES. Lady, whoe'er thou art, why for these things  
Dost thou lament ? Why mourn for ills, which soon  
Will fall on us ? Him I esteem unwise,  
Who, when he sees death near, tries to o'ercome  
Its terrors with bewailings, without hope  
Of safety : ill he adds to ill, and makes  
His folly known, yet dies. We must give way  
To fortune : therefore mourn not thou for us :  
We know, we are acquainted with your rites.

IPH. Which of you by the name of Pylades  
Is called ? This first it is my wish to know.

ORES. If aught of pleasure that may give thee, he.

IPH. A native of what Grecian state, declare.

ORES. What profit, knowing this, wouldst thou obtain ?

IPH. And are you brothers, of one mother born ?

ORES. Brothers by friendship, lady, not by birth.

IPH. To thee what name was by thy father given ?

ORES. With just cause I Unhappy might be called.

IPH. I ask not that ; to fortune that ascribe.

ORES. Dying unknown rude scoffs I shall avoid.

IPH. Wilt thou refuse ? Why are thy thoughts so high ?

ORES. My body thou mayst kill, but not my name.

IPH. Wilt thou not say a native of what state?

ORES. The question nought avails, since I must die.

IPH. What hinders thee from granting me this grace?

ORES. Th' illustrious Argos I my country boast.

IPH. By the gods, stranger, is thy birth from thence?

ORES. My birth is from Mycenæ, once the blest.

IPH. Dost thou an exile fly, or by what fate?

ORES. Of my free will, in part not free, I fly.

IPH. Wilt thou then tell me what I wish to know?

ORES. Whate'er is foreign to my private griefs.

IPH. To my dear wish from Argos art thou come.

ORES. Not to my wish : but if to thine, enjoy it.

IPH. Troy, whose fame spreads so wide, perchance thou knowst.

ORES. Oh that I ne'er had known her, e'en in dreams !

IPH. They say she is no more, by war destroyed.

ORES. It is so : you have heard no false reports.

IPH. Is Helena with Menelaus returned ?

ORES. She is : and one I love her coming rues.

IPH. Where is she ? Me too she of old hath wronged.

ORES. At Sparta with her former lord she dwells.

IPH. By Greece, and not by me alone, abhorred !

ORES. I from her nuptials have my share of grief.

IPH. And are the Greeks, as fame reports, returned ?

ORES. How briefly all things dost thou ask at once ?

IPH. This favour, ere thou die, I wish t' obtain.

ORES. Ask then : since such thy wish, I will inform thee.

IPH. Calchas, a prophet, came he back from Troy ?

ORES. He perished : at Mycenæ such the fame.

IPH. Goddess revered ! But doth Ulysses live ?

ORES. He lives they say ; but is not yet returned.

IPH. Perish the wretch, nor see his country more !

ORES. Wish him not ill, for all with him is ill.

IPH. But doth the son of sea-born Thetis live ?

ORES. He lives not : vain his nuptial rites at Aulis.

IPH. That all was fraud, as those, who felt it, say.

ORES. But who art thou, inquiring thus of Greece ?

IPH. I am from thence, in early youth undone.



ORES. Thou hast a right t' inquire what there hath passed.

IPH. What knowst thou of the chief, men call the blest?

ORES. Who? Of the blest was not the chief I knew.

IPH. The royal Agememnon, son of Atreus.

ORES. Of him I know not, lady; cease to ask.

IPH. Nay, by the gods, tell me, and cheer my soul.

ORES. He's dead, th' unhappy chief; no single ill.

IPH. Dead! By what adverse fate? Oh wretched me!

ORES. Why mourn for this? How doth it touch thy breast?

IPH. The glories of his former state I mourn.

ORES. Dreadfully murdered by a woman's hand.

IPH. How wretched she that slew him, he thus slain!

ORES. Now then forbear: of him inquire no more.

IPH. This only; lives th' unhappy monarch's wife?

ORES. She, lady, is no more, slain by her son.

IPH. Alas, the ruined house! What his intent?

ORES. T' avenge on her his noble father slain.

IPH. An ill, but righteous deed, how justly done!

ORES. Though righteous, by the gods he is not blest.

IPH. Hath Agamemnon other offspring left?

ORES. He left one virgin daughter, named Electra.

IPH. Of her, that died a victim, is aught said?

ORES. This only, dead she sees the light no more.

IPH. Unhappy she! the father too, who slew her!

ORES. For a bad woman she unseemly died.

IPH. At Argos lives the murdered father's son?

ORES. Nowhere he lives, poor wretch, and everywhere.

IPH. False dreams, farewell: for nothing you import.

ORES. Nor are those gods, that have the name of wise.

Less false than fleeting dreams. In things divine,

And in things human, great confusion reigns.

One thing is left; that, not unwise of soul,

Obedient to the prophet's voice he perished;

For that he perished they, who know, report.

CHOR. What shall we know, what of our parents know?

If yet they live, or not, who can inform us?

IPH. Hear me: this converse prompts a thought, which  
gives

Promise of good, ye youths of Greece, to you,

To these, and me ; thus may it well be done,  
If willing to my purpose all assent.  
Wilt thou, if I shall save thee, go for me  
A messenger to Argos, to my friends  
Charged with a letter, which a captive wrote,  
Who pitied me, nor murd'rous thought my hand,  
But that he died beneath the law, these rites  
The goddess deeming just ? For from that hour  
I have not found who might to Argos bear  
Himself my message, back with life returned,  
Or send to any of my friends my letter.  
Thou therefore, since it seems thou dost not bear  
Ill will to me, and dost Mycenæ know,  
And those I wish t' address, be safe, and live,  
No base reward for a light letter life  
Receiving : and let him, since thus the state  
Requires, without thee to the goddess bleed.

ORES. Virgin unknown, well hast thou said in all  
Save this, that to the goddess he should bleed  
A victim ; that were heavy grief indeed.  
I steered the vessel to these ills, he sailed  
Attendant on my toils : to gain thy grace  
By his destruction, and withdraw myself  
From sufferings, were unjust. Thus let it be :  
Give him the letter ; to fulfil thy wish  
To Argos he will bear it : me let him,  
Who claims that office, slay. Base is his soul,  
Who in calamities involves his friends,  
And saves himself : this is a friend, whose life,  
Dear to me as my own, I would preserve.

IPH. Excellent spirit ! From some noble root  
It shows thee sprung, and to thy friends a friend  
Sincere : of those that share my blood if one  
Remains, such may he be ; for I am not  
Without a brother, strangers, from my sight  
Though distant now. Since then thy wish is such,  
Him will I send to Argos : he shall bear  
My letter, thou shalt die ; for this desire  
Hath strong possession of thy noble soul.

ORES. Who then shall do the dreadful deed, and slay me?

IPH. I: to atone the goddess is my charge.

ORES. A charge unenvied, virgin, and unblessed.

IPH. Necessity constrains: I must obey.

ORES. Wilt thou, a woman, plunge the sword in men?

IPH. No: but thy locks to sprinkle round is mine.

ORES. Whose then, if I may ask, the bloody deed?

IPH. To some within the temple this belongs.

ORES. What tomb is destined to receive my corse?

IPH. The hallowed fire within, and a dark cave.

ORES. Oh that a sister's hand might wrap these limbs!

IPH. Vain wish, unhappy youth, whoe'er thou art,

Hast thou conceived; for from this barbarous land

Far is her dwelling. Yet of what my power

Permits, since thou from Argos drawst thy birth,

No grace will I omit; for in thy tomb

I will place much of ornament, and pour

The dulcet labour of the yellow bee,

From mountain flowers extracted, on thy pyre.

But I will go, and from the temple bring

The letter: yet 'gainst me no hostile thought

Conceive. You that attend here, guard them well,

But without chains. To one, whom most I love

Of all my friends, to Argos I shall send

Tidings perchance unlooked for; and this letter,

Declaring those, whom he thought dead, alive,

Shall bear him an assured and solid joy.

PYLADES, ORESTES, CHORUS.

CHOR. Thee, o'er whose limbs the bloody drops shall soon  
Be from the lavers sprinkled, I lament.

ORES. This asks no pity, strangers: but farewell.

CHOR. Thee, for thy happy fate we reverence, youth,  
Who to thy country shalt again return.

PYL. To friends unwished, who leave their friends to die.

CHOR. Painful dismission. Which shall I esteem  
Most lost, alas, alas! which most undone!  
For doubts my wav'ring judgment yet divide,  
If chief for thee my sighs should swell, or thee.

ORES. By the gods, Pylades, is thy mind touched  
In manner like as mine ?

PYL. I cannot tell ;  
Nor to thy question have I to reply.

ORES. Who is this virgin ? With what zeal for Greece  
Made she inquiries of us what the toils  
At Troy, if yet the Grecians were returned,  
And Calchas, from the flight of birds who formed  
Presages of the future ? And she named  
Achilles : with what tenderness bewailed  
Th' unhappy Agamemnon ! Of his wife  
She asked me, of his children : thence her race  
This unknown virgin draws, an Argive ; else  
Ne'er would she send this letter, nor have wished  
To know these things, as if she bore a share,  
If Argos flourish, in its prosperous state.

PYL. Such were my thoughts (but thou hast given them  
words,  
Preventing me), of every circumstance,  
Save one : the fate of kings all know, whose state  
Holds aught of rank. But pass to other thoughts.

ORES. What ? Share them ; so thou best mayst be in-  
formed.

PYL. That thou shouldst die, and I behold this light,  
Were base : with thee I sailed, with thee to die  
Becomes me ; else shall I obtain the name  
Of a vile coward through the Argive state,  
And the deep vales of Phocis. Most will think,  
For most think ill, that by betraying thee  
I saved myself, home to return alone :  
Or haply that I slew thee, and thy death  
Contrived, that in the ruin of thy house  
Thy empire I might grasp, to me devolved  
As wedded to thy sister, now sole heir.  
These things I fear, and hold them infamous.  
Behoves me then with thee to die, with thee  
To bleed a victim, on the pyre with thine  
To give my body to the flames ; for this  
Becomes me as thy friend, who dread reproach.

ORES. Speak more auspicious words: 'tis mine to bear  
 Ills that are mine : and single when the woe,  
 I would not bear it double. What thou sayst  
 Is vile and infamous, would light on me.  
 Should I cause thee to die, who in my toils  
 Hast borne a share : to me, who from the gods  
 Suffer afflictions which I suffer, death  
 Is not unwelcome : thou art happy, thine  
 An unpolluted and a prosperous house ;  
 Mine impious and unblest. If thou art saved,  
 And from my sister, whom I gave to thee  
 Betrothed thy bride, art blessed with sons, my name  
 May yet remain, nor all my father's house  
 In total ruin sink. Go then, and live ;  
 Dwell in the mansion of thy ancestors.  
 And when thou comst to Greece, to Argos famed  
 For warrior-steeds, by this right hand I charge thee  
 Raise a sepulchral mound, and on its place  
 A monument to me ; and to my tomb  
 Her tears, her tresses let my sister give :  
 And say that by an Argive woman's hand  
 I perished, to the altar's bloody rites  
 A hallowed victim. Never let thy soul  
 Betray my sister, for thou seest her state  
 Of friends how destitute, her father's house  
 How desolate. Farewell ! Of all my friends  
 Thee have I found most friendly, from my youth  
 Trained up with me, in all my sylvan sports  
 Thou dear associate, and through many toils  
 Thou faithful partner of my miseries.  
 Me Phoebus, though a prophet, hath deceived,  
 And meditating guile hath driven me far  
 From Greece, of former oracles ashamed ;  
 To him resigned, obedient to his words.  
 I slew my mother, and my need is death.

PYL. Yes, I will raise thy tomb : thy sister's bed  
 I never will betray, unhappy youth,  
 For I will hold thee dearer when thou'rt dead,  
 Than while thou livest ; nor hath yet the voice

Of Phœbus quite destroyed thee, though thou stand  
To slaughter nigh : but sometimes mighty woes  
Yield mighty changes, so when fortune wills.

ORES. Forbear : the words of Phœbus nought avail me ;  
For passing from the shrine the virgin comes.

IPHIGENIA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

IPH. Go you away [*to the Guards*], and in the shrine prepare  
What those, who o'er the rites preside, require.—  
Here, strangers, is the letter folded close.  
What I would further, hear : the mind of man  
In dangers, and again from fear relieved  
Of safety when assured, is not the same :  
I therefore fear lest he, who should convey  
To Argos this epistle, when returned  
Safe to his native country will neglect  
My letter, as a thing of little worth.

ORES. What wouldst thou then ? What is thy anxious  
thought ?

IPH. This ; let him give an oath that he will bear  
To Argos this epistle to those friends  
To whom it is my ardent wish to send it.

ORES. And wilt thou in return give him thy oath ?

IPH. That I will do, or will not do, say what.

ORES. To send him from this barbarous shore alive.

IPH. That's just ; how should he bear my letter else ?

ORES. But will the monarch to these things assent ?

IPH. By me induced. Him I will see embarked.

ORES. Swear then ; and thou propose the righteous oath.

IPH. This, let him say, he to my friends will give.

PYL. Well ; to thy friends this letter I will give.

IPH. Thee will I send safe through the dark'ning rocks.

PYL. What god dost thou invoke t' attest thy oath ?

IPH. Diana, at whose shrine high charge I hold.

PYL. And I heaven's potent king, the awful Jove.

IPH. But if thou slight thy oath, and do me wrong ?

PYL. Never may I return. But if thou fail,  
And save me not :

IPH. Then never whilst I live

May I revisit my loved Argos more.

PYL. One thing, not mentioned, thy attention claims.

IPH. If honour owns it, this will touch us both.

PYL. Let me in this be pardoned, if the bark  
Be lost, and with it in the surging waves

Thy letter perish, and I naked gain

The shore, no longer binding be the oath.

IPH. Knowst thou what I will do? For various ills  
Arise to those that plough the dangerous deep.

What in this letter is contained, what here

Is written, all I will repeat to thee,

That thou mayst bear my message to my friends.

'Gainst danger thus I guard : if thou preserve

The letter, that though silent will declare

My purport : if it perish in the sea

Saving thyself my words too thou wilt save.

PYL. Well hast thou said touching the gods and me.

Say then, to whom at Argos shall I bear

This letter? What relate as heard from thee?

IPH. This message to Orestes, to the son

Of Agamemnon bear : "She, who was slain

At Aulis, Iphigenia, sends thee this :

She lives, but not to those who then were there."

ORES. Where is she? From the dead returned to life?

IPH. She whom thou seest ; but interrupt me not.

To Argos, O my brother, ere I die

Bear me from this barbaric land, and far

Remove me from this altar's bloody rites,

At which to slay the stranger is my charge.

ORES. What shall I say? Where are we, Pylades?

IPH. Or on thy house for vengeance will I call,

Or stes — Twice repeated, learn the name.

ORES. Ye gods!

IPH. In my cause why invoke the gods?

ORES. Nothing ; proceed. My thoughts were wandering

wide.

IPH. Things of thee unasked I soon shall learn.

IPH. Tell him the goddess saved me, in exchange

A hind presenting, which my father slew  
 A victim, deeming that he plunged his sword  
 Deep in my breast ; me in this land she placed.  
 Thou hast my charge ; and this my letter speaks.

PYL. Oh thou hast bound me with an easy oath ;  
 What I have sworn with honest purpose, long  
 Defer I not, but thus discharge mine oath.  
 To thee a letter from thy sister, lo,  
 I bear, Orestes ; and I give it thee.

ORES. I do receive it, but forbear t' uncloset  
 Its foldings, greater pleasure first t' enjoy  
 Than words can give. My sister, O most dear,  
 Astonished e'en to disbelief I throw  
 Mine arms around thee with a fond embrace,  
 In transport at the wond'rous things I hear.

CHOR. Stranger, thou dost not well with hands profane  
 Thus to pollute the priestess of the shrine,  
 Grasping her garments hallowed from the touch.

ORES. My sister, my dear sister, from one sire,  
 From Agamemnon sprung, turn not away,  
 Holding thy brother thus beyond all hope.

IPH. My brother ! Thou my brother ! Wilt thou not  
 Unsay these words ? At Argos far he dwells.

ORES. Thy brother, O unhappy ! is not there.

IPH. Thee did the Spartan Tyndarus bring forth ?

ORES. And from the son of Pelops' son I sprung.

IPH. What sayst thou ? Canst thou give me proof of  
 this ?

ORES. I can : ask something of my father's house.

IPH. Nay, it is thine to speak, mine to attend.

ORES. First let me mention things which I have heard  
 Electra speak & to thee is known the strife  
 Which fierce 'twixt Atreus and Thyestes rose.

IPH. Yes, I have heard it ; for the golden ram.

ORES. In the rich texture didst thou not inweave it ?

IPH. O thou most dear ! Thou windest near my heart.

ORES. And image in the web th' averted sun ?

IPH. In the fine threads that figure did I work.

ORES. For Aulis did thy mother bathe thy limbs ?



IPH. I know it, to unlucky spousals led.

ORES. Why to thy mother didst thou send thy locks?

IPH. Devoted for my body to the tomb.

ORES. What I myself have seen I now as proofs  
Will mention. In thy father's house hung high  
Within thy virgin chambers the old spear  
Of Pelops, which he brandished when he slew  
Enomaus, and won his beauteous bride,  
The virgin Hippodamia, Pisa's boast.

IPH. O thou most dear, for thou art he, most dear  
Acknowledged, thee, Orestes, do I hold,  
From Argos, from thy country distant far?

ORES. And hold I thee, my sister, long deemed dead?  
Grief mixed with joy, and tears, not taught by woe  
To rise, stand melting in thy eyes and mine.

IPH. Thee yet an infant in thy nurse's arms  
I left, a babe I left thee in the house.  
Thou art more happy, O my soul, than speech  
Knows to express. What shall I say? 'Tis all  
Surpassing wonder and the power of words.

ORES. May we together from this hour be blest!

IPH. An unexpected pleasure, O my friends,  
Have I received; yet fear I from my hands  
Lest to the air it fly. O sacred hearths  
Raised by the Cyclops! O my country, loved  
Mycenæ! Now that thou didst give me birth  
I thank thee; now I thank thee that my youth  
Thou trainedst, since my brother thou hast trained,  
A beam of light, the glory of his house.

ORES. We in our race are happy; but our life,  
My sister, by misfortunes is unhappy.

IPH. I was, I know, unhappy when the sword  
My father, frenetic, pointed at my neck.

ORES. Ah me! methinks e'en now I see thee there.

IPH. When to Achilles, brother, not a bride  
I to the sacrifice by guile was led,  
And tears and groans the altar compassed round.

ORES. Alas the lovers there!

IPH.

I mourned the deed

My father dared ; unlike a father's love,  
Cruel, unlike a father's love, to me.

ORES. Ill deeds succeed to ill ; if thou hadst slain  
Thy brother, by some god impelled, what griefs  
Must have been thine at such a dreadful deed !

IPH. Dreadful, my brother, oh how dreadful ! Scarce  
Hast thou escaped a foul, unhallowed death,  
Slain by my hands. But how will these things end ?  
What fortune will assist me ? What safe means  
Shall I devise to send thee from this state,  
From slaughter, to thy native land, to Argos,  
Ere with thy blood the cruel sword be stained ?  
This to devise, O my unhappy soul !  
This to devise is thine. Wilt thou by land,  
Thy bark deserted, speed thy flight on foot ?  
Perils await thee 'midst these barbarous tribes  
Through pathless wilds. And 'twixt the clashing rocks  
Narrow the passage for the flying bark,  
And long. Unhappy, ah unhappy me !  
What god, what mortal, what unlooked-for chance  
Will expedite our dangerous way, and show  
Two sprung from Atreus a release from ills ?

CHOR. What having seen and heard I shall relate  
Is marvellous, and passes fabling tales.

PYL. When after absence long, Orestes, friend  
Meets friend, embraces will express their joy.  
Behoves us now, bidding farewell to grief  
And heedful to obtain the glorious name  
Of safety, from this barbarous land to fly.  
The wise, of fortune not regardless, seize  
Th' occasion, and to happiness advance.

ORES. Well hast thou said ; and Fortune here, I ween,  
Will aid us : to the firm and strenuous mind  
More potent works the influence divine.

IPH. Nothing shall check, nothing restrain my speech :  
First will I question thee what fortune waits  
Electra : this to know would yield me joy.

ORES. With him she dwells, and happy is her life.

IPH. Whence then is he ? and from what father sprung ?

ORES. From Phocis : Strophius is his father named.

IPH. By Atreus' daughter to my blood allied ?

ORES. Nearly allied : my only faithful friend.

IPH. He was not then, me when my father slew.

ORES. Childless was Strophius for some length of time.

IPH. O thou, the husband of my sister, hail !

ORES. More than relation, my preserver too.

IPH. But to thy mother why that dreadful deed ?

ORES. Of that no more : t' avenge my father's death.

IPH. But for what cause did she her husband slay ?

ORES. Of her inquire not : thou wouldst blush to hear.

IPH. The eyes of Argos now are raised to thee.

ORES. There Menelaus is lord ; I, outcast, fly.

IPH. Hath he then wronged his brother's ruined house ?

ORES. Not so : the Furies fright me from the land.

IPH. The madness this, which seized thee on the shore ?

ORES. I was not first beheld unhappy there.

IPH. Stern powers ; they haunt thee for thy mother's blood.

ORES. And ruthless make me champ the bloody bit.

IPH. Why to this region hast thou steered thy course ?

ORES. Commanded by Apollo's voice I come.

IPH. With that intent ? if that may be disclosed.

ORES. I will inform thee, though to length of speech

This leads. When vengeance from my hands o'ertook

My mother's deed, foul deeds which let me pass

In silence, by the Furies' fierce assaults

To flight I was impelled : to Athens then

Apollo sent me, that, my cause there heard,

I might appease the vengeful powers, whose names

May not be uttered. The tribunal there

Is holy, which for Mars when stained with blood

Jove in old times established. There arrived

None willingly received me, by the gods

As one abhorred ; and they, who felt the touch

Of shame, the hospitable board alone

Yielded, and though one common roof beneath.

Their silence showing they disdained to hold

Converse with me, I took from them apart

A lone repast ; to each was placed a bowl  
Of the same measure ; this they filled with wine,  
And bathed their spirits in delight. Unmeet  
I deemed it to express offence at those  
Who entertained me, but in silence grieved,  
Showing a cheer as though I marked it not,  
And sighed for that I shed my mother's blood.  
A feast, I hear, at Athens is ordained  
From this my evil plight, e'en yet observed,  
In which the equal-measured bowl then used  
Is by that people held in honour high.  
But when to the tribunal on the mount  
Of Mars I came, one stand I took, and one  
The eldest of the Furies opposite :  
The cause was heard touching my mother's blood,  
And Phœbus saved me by his evidence ;  
Equal, by Pallas numbered, were the votes,  
And I from doom of blood victorious freed.  
Such of the Furies as there sate, appeased  
By the just sentence, nigh the court resolved  
To fix their seat ; but others, whom the law  
Appeased not, with relentless tortures still  
Pursued me, till I reached the hallowed soil  
Of Phœbus. Stretched before his shrine I swore  
Foodless to waste my wretched life away,  
Unless the god, by whom I was undone,  
Would save me. From the golden tripod burst  
The voice divine, and sent me to this shore,  
Commanding me to bear the image hence,  
Which fell from Jove, and in th' Athenian land  
To fix it. What th' oracular voice assigned  
My safety, do thou aid. If we obtain  
The statue of the goddess, I no more  
With madness shall be tortured, but this arm  
Shall place thee in my bark, which ploughs the waves  
With many an oar, and to Mycenæ safe  
Bear thee again. Show then a sister's love,  
O thou most dear, preserve thy father's house,  
Preserve me too ; for me destruction waits,

And all the race of Pelops, it we bear not  
This heaven-descended image from the shrine.

CHOR. The anger of the gods hath rag'd severe,  
And plunged the race of Tantalus in woes.

IPH. Ere thy arrival here, a fond desire  
To be again at Argos, and to see  
Thee, my loved brother, fill'd my soul. Thy wish  
Is my warm wish, to free thee from thy toils,  
And from its ruins raise my father's house :  
Nor harbour I 'gainst him, that slew me, thought  
Of harsh resentment : from thy blood my hands  
Would I keep pure, thy house I would preserve.  
But from the goddess how may this be hid ?  
The tyrant too I fear, when he shall find  
The statue on its marble base no more.  
What then from death will save me ? What excuse  
Shall I devise ? Yet by one daring deed  
Might these things be achieved, couldst thou bear hence  
The image, me too in thy gallant bark  
Placing secure, how glorious were th' attempt !  
Me if thou join not with thee, I am lost  
Indeed ; but thou, with prudent measures form'd,  
Return. I fly no danger, not e'en death,  
Be death required, to save thee. No : the man  
Dying is mourn'd as to his house a loss ;  
But woman's weakness is of light esteem.

ORES. I would not be the murderer of my mother,  
And of thee too ; sufficient is her blood.  
No ; I will share thy fortune, live with thee,  
Or with thee die : to Argos I will lead thee,  
If here I perish not ; or dying here  
Remain with thee. But what my mind suggests  
Hear : if Diana were averse to this,  
How could the voice of Phoebus from his shrine  
Declare that to the state of Pallas hence  
The statue of the goddess I should bear,  
And see thy face ? All this together weigh'd  
Gives hope of fair success, and our return.

IPH. But how effect it, that we neither do.

And what we wish achieve? For our return

On this depends : this claims deliberate thought.

ORES. Have we not means to work the tyrant's death?

IPH. For strangers full of peril were th' attempt.

ORES. Thee would it save and me, it must be dared.

IPH. I could not : yet thy promptness I approve.

ORES. What if thou lodge me in the shrine concealed?

IPH. That in the shades of night we may escape?

ORES. Night is a friend to frauds, the light to truth.

IPH. Within are sacred guards ; we 'scape not them.

ORES. Ruin then waits us : how can we be saved?

IPH. I think I have some new and safe device.

ORES. What is it? Let me know : impart thy thought.

IPH. Thy sufferings for my purpose I will use.

ORES. To form devices quick is woman's wit.

IPH. And say, thy mother slain thou fledst from Argos.

ORES. If to aught good, avail thee of my ills.

IPH. Unmeet then at this shrine to offer thee.

ORES. What cause alleged? I reach not thine intent.

IPH. As now impure : when hallowed, I will slay thee.

ORES. How is the image thus more promptly gained?

IPH. Thee I will hallow in the ocean waves.

ORES. The statue we would gain is in the temple.

IPH. That, by thy touch polluted, I would cleanse.

ORES. Where? On the wat'ry margin of the main?

IPH. Where thy tall bark secured with cables rides.

ORES. And who shall bear the image in his hands?

IPH. Myself : profaned by any touch but mine.

ORES. What of this blood shall on my friend be charged?

IPH. His hands it shall be said, like thine are stained.

ORES. In secret this, or to the king disclosed?

IPH. With his assent ; I cannot hide it from him.

ORES. My bark with ready oars attends thee near.

IPH. That all be well appointed be thy charge.

ORES. One thing alone remains, that these conceal  
Our purpose : but address them, teach thy tongue  
Persuasive words : a woman hath the power  
To melt the heart to pity : thus perchance  
All things may to our warmest wish succeed.

IPH. Ye train of females, to my soul most dear,  
 On you mine eyes are turned, on you depends  
 My fate: with prosperous fortune to be blest,  
 Or to be nothing, to my country lost,  
 Of a dear kinsman and a much loved brother  
 Deprived. This plea I first would urge, that we  
 Are women, and have hearts by nature formed  
 To love each other, of our mutual trusts  
 Most firm preservers. Touching our design  
 Be silent, and assist our flight; nought claims  
 More honour than the faithful tongue. You see  
 How the same fortune links us three, most dear  
 Each to the other, to revisit safe  
 Our country, or to die. If I am saved,  
 That thou mayst share my fortune, I to Greece  
 Will bring thee safe: but thee by this right hand,  
 Thee I conjure, and thee; by this loved cheek  
 Thee, by thy knees, by all that in your house  
 Is dearest to you, father, mother, child,  
 If you have children. What do you reply?  
 Which of you speaks assent? Or which dissents?  
 But be you all assenting: for my plea  
 If you approve not, ruin falls on me,  
 And my unhappy brother too must die.

CHOR. Be confident, loved lady, and consult  
 Only thy safety: all thou givst in charge,  
 Be witness, mighty Jove, I will conceal.

IPH. Oh for this generous promise be you blest!  
 To enter now the temple be thy part,  
 And thine: for soon the monarch of the land  
 Will come, inquiring if the strangers yet  
 Have bowed their necks as victims at the shrine.—  
 Goddess revered, who in the dreadful bay  
 Of Aulis from my father's slaughtering hand  
 Didst save me, save me now, and these; through thee  
 Else will the voice of Phœbus be no more  
 Held true by mortals: from this barbarous land  
 To Athens go propitious; here to dwell  
 Beseems thee not: thine be a polished state!

## CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

O bird, that round each craggy height  
 Projecting o'er the sea below,  
 Wheelest thy melancholy flight,  
 Thy song attuned to notes of woe ;  
 The wise thy tender sorrows own,  
 Which thy lost lord unceasing moan :  
 Like thine, sad Halcyon, be my strain,  
 A bird that have no wings to fly :  
 With fond desire for Greece I sigh,  
 And for my much loved social train ;  
 Sigh for Diana, pitying maid,  
 Who joys to rove o'er Cynthus' heights,  
 Or in the branching laurel's shade,  
 Or in the soft-haired palm delights,  
 Or the hoar olive's sacred boughs,  
 Lenient of sad Latona's woes,  
 Or in the lake that rolls its wave  
 Where swans their plumage love to lave,  
 Then to the Muses soaring high,  
 The homage pay of melody.

*Antistrophe 1.*

Ye tears, what frequent-falling showers  
 Rolled down these cheeks in streams of woe,  
 When in the dust my country's towers  
 Lay levelled by the conquering foe ;  
 And, to their spears a prey, their oars  
 Brought me to these barbaric shores !  
 For gold exchanged, a traffic base,  
 No vulgar slave, the task is mine  
 Here at Diana's awful shrine,  
 Who loves the woodland hind to chase,  
 The virgin priestess to attend,  
 Daughter of rich Mycenæ's lord ;  
 At other shrines her wish to bend,  
 Where bleeds the victim less abhorred :



No respite to her griefs she knows,  
 Not so the heart inured to woes,  
 As trained to sorrow's rigid lore :  
 Now comes a change, it mourns no more.  
 But to long bliss when ill succeeds  
 The anguished heart for ever bleeds.

*Strophe 2.*

Thee, loved virgin, freed from fear  
 Home the Argive bark shall bear :  
 Mountain Pan, with shrilling strain,  
 To the oars that dash the main  
 In just cadence well agreed,  
 Shall accord his wax-joined reed :  
 Phœbus, with a prophet's fire  
 Sweeping o'er his seven-stringed lyre,  
 And his voice attuning high  
 To the swelling harmony,  
 Thee shall guide the wild waves o'er  
 To the soft Athenian shore.  
 Leaving me, thy oars shall sweep  
 Eager o'er the foaming deep ;  
 Thou shalt catch the rising gales  
 Swelling in thy firm-bound sails,  
 And thy bark in gallant pride  
 Light shall o'er the billows glide.

*Antistrophe 2.*

Might I through the lucid air  
 Fly where rolls yon flaming car,  
 O'er these loved and modest bowers,  
 Where I passed my youthful hours,  
 I would stay my weary flight,  
 Wave no more my pennons light,  
 But amidst the virgin band,  
 Once my loved companions, stand :  
 Once 'midst them my charms could move.  
 Blooming then, the flames of love,

When the mazy dance I trod,  
 Whilst with joy my mother glowed ;  
 When to vie in grace was mine,  
 And in splendid robes to shine ;  
 For with radiant tints imprest  
 Glowed for me the gorgeous vest ;  
 And these tresses gave new grace,  
 As their ringlets shade my face.

THOAS, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

THO. Where is the Grecian lady, to whose charge  
 This temple is committed? Have her rites  
 Hallowed the strangers? Do their bodies burn  
 In the recesses of the sacred shrine?

CHOR. She comes, and will inform thee, king, of all.

THO. Daughter of Agamemnon, what means this !  
 The statue of the goddess in thine arms  
 Why dost thou bear from its firm base removed?

IPH. There in the portal, monarch, stay thy step.

THO. What of strange import in the shrine hath chanced?

IPH. Things ominous: that word I, holy, speak.

THO. To what is tuned thy proem? Plainly speak.

IPH. Not pure the victims, king, you lately seized.

THO. What showed thee this? Or speakest thou but thy  
 thought?

IPH. Back turned the sacred image on its base.

THO. Spontaneous turned, or by an earthquake moved?

IPH. Spontaneous; and, averted, closed its eyes.

THO. What was the cause? The blood-stained strangers' guilt?

IPH. That and nought else; for horrible their deeds.

THO. What, have they slain some Scythian on the shore?

IPH. They came polluted with domestic blood.

THO. What blood? I have a strong desire to know.

IPH. They slew their mother with confederate swords.

THO. O Phœbus! This hath no barbarian dared.

IPH. All Greece indignant chased them from her realms.

THO. Bearst thou for this the image from the shrine?

IPH. To the pure air, from stain of blood removed.

THO. By what means didst thou know the strangers' guilt?

IPH. I learned it as the statue started back.

THO. Greece trained thee wise: this well hast thou discerned.

IPH. Now with sweet blandishments they soothe my soul.

THO. Some glozing tale from Argos telling thee?

IPH. I have one brother: he, they say, lives happy.

THO. That thou mayst save them for their pleasing news?

IPH. And that my father lives, by fortune blessed.

THO. But on the goddess well thy thoughts are turned.

IPH. I hate all Greece; for it hath ruined me.

THO. What with the strangers, say then, should be done?

IPH. The law ordained in reverence we must hold.

THO. Are then thy lovers ready, and the sword?

IPH. First I would cleanse them with ablutions pure.

THO. In fountain waters, or the ocean wave?

IPH. All man's pollutions doth the salt sea cleanse.

THO. More holy to the goddess will they bleed.

IPH. And better what I have in charge advance.

THO. Doth not the wave e'en 'gainst the temple beat?

IPH. This requires solitude: more must I do.

THO. Lead where thou wilt: on secret rites I pry not.

IPH. The image of the goddess I must cleanse.

THO. If it be stained with touch of mother's blood,

IPH. I could not else have borne it from its base.

THO. Just is thy provident and pious thought:

For this by all the state thou art revered.

IPH. Knowst thou what next I would?

THO. 'Tis thine thy will

To signify.

IPH. Give for these strangers chains.

THO. To what place can they fly?

IPH. A Grecian knows

Nought faithful.

THO. Of my train go some for chains.

IPH. Let them lead forth the strangers.

THO. Be it so.

IPH. And veil their faces.

THO. From the sun's bright beams?

- IPH. Some of thy train send with me.  
 THO. These shall go  
 Attending thee.  
 IPH. One to the city send.  
 THO. With what instructions charged?  
 IPH. That all remain  
 Within their houses.  
 THO. That the stain of blood  
 They meet not?  
 IPH. These things have pollution in them.  
 THO. Go thou, and bear th' instructions.  
 IPH. That none come  
 In sight.  
 THO. How wisely careful for the city!  
 IPH. Warn our friends most.  
 THO. This speaks thy care for me.  
 IPH. Stay thou before the shrine.  
 THO. To what intent?  
 IPH. Cleanse it with lustral fires.  
 THO. That thy return  
 May find it pure?  
 IPH. But when the strangers come  
 Forth from the temple.  
 THO. What must I then do?  
 IPH. Spread o'er thine eyes a veil.  
 THO. That I receive not  
 Pollution?  
 IPH. Tedious if my stay appear.  
 THO. What bounds may be assigned?  
 IPH. Deem it not strange.  
 THO. At leisure what the rites require perform.  
 IPH. May this lustration as I wish succeed.  
 THO. Thy wish is mine.  
 IPH. But from the temple, see,  
 The strangers come, the sacred ornaments,  
 The hallowed lambs, for I with blood must wash  
 This execrable blood away, the light  
 Of torches, and what else my rites require .  
 To purify these strangers to the goddess.

But to the natives of this land my voice  
Proclaims, from this pollution far remove,  
Art thou attendant at the shrine, who liftest  
Pure to the gods thy hands, or nuptial rites  
Dost thou prepare, or pregnant matron, hence  
Be gone, that this defilement none may touch.  
Thou, daughter of Latona and high Jove,  
O royal virgin, if I cleanse the stain  
Of these, and where I ought with holy rites  
Address thee, thou shalt hold thy residence  
In a pure mansion ; we too shall be blest !  
More though I speak not, goddess, unexpressed  
All things to thee and to the gods are known.

CHOR. Latona's glorious offspring claims the song,  
Born the hallowed shades among  
Where fruitful Delos winds her valleys low ;  
Bright-haired Phœbus skilled t' inspire  
Raptures as he sweeps the lyre,  
And she that glories in th' unerring bow.  
From the rocky ridges steep,  
At whose foot the hushed waves sleep,  
Left their far famed native shore,  
Them th' exulting mother bore  
To Parnassus, on whose heights  
Bacchus shouting holds his rites ;  
Glitt'ring in the burnished shade,  
By the laurel's branches made,  
Where th' enormous dragon lies,  
Brass his scales, and flame his eyes,  
Earth-born monster, that around  
Rolling guards th' oracular ground :  
Him, while yet a sportive child  
In his mother's arms that smiled,  
Phœbus slew, and seized the shrine  
Whence proceeds the voice divine ;  
On the golden tripod placed,  
Throne by falsehood ne'er disgraced,  
Where Castalia's pure stream flows,  
He the fates to mortals shows.

But when Themis, whom of yore  
 Earth, her fruitful mother, bore,  
 From her hallowed seat he drove,  
 Earth t' avenge her daughter strove,  
 Forming visions of the night,  
 Which, in rapt dreams hov'ring light,  
 All that Time's dark volumes hold  
 Might to mortal sense unfold,  
 When in midnight's sable shades  
 Sleep the silent couch invades :  
 Thus did Earth her vengeance boast.  
 His prophetic honours lost,  
 Royal Phœbus speeds his flight  
 To Olympus, on whose height  
 At the throne of Jove he stands,  
 Stretching forth his little hands,  
 Suppliant that the Pythian shrine  
 Feel no more the wrath divine ;  
 That the goddess he appease,  
 That her nightly visions cease.  
 Jove with smiles beheld his son  
 Early thus address his throne,  
 Suing with ambitious pride  
 O'er the rich shrine to preside :  
 He assenting bowed his head.  
 Straight the nightly visions fled ;  
 And prophetic dreams no more  
 Hovered slumb'ring mortals o'er :  
 Now to Phœbus given again  
 All his honours pure remain ;  
 Votaries distant regions send  
 His frequented throne t' attend,  
 And the firm decrees of fate  
 On his faithful voice await.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MESS. Say you, that keep the temple and attend  
 The altar, where is Thoas, Scythia's king ?  
 Open these strong-compacted gates, and call  
 Forth from the shrine the monarch of the land.

CHOR. Wherefore? At thy command if I must speak.

MESS. The two young men are gone, through the device  
Of Agamemnon's daughter; from this land  
They fly, and in their Grecian galley placed  
The sacred image of the goddess bear.

CHOR. Incredible thy tale: but whom thou seekest  
The monarch from the temple went in haste.

MESS. Whither? For what is doing he should know.

CHOR. We know not: but go thou and seek for him;  
Where'er thou find him, thou wilt tell him this.

MESS. See, what a faithless race you women are!  
In all that hath been done you have a part.

CHOR. Sure thou art mad? What with the strangers'  
flight

Have we to do? But wilt thou not with all  
The speed thou mayst go to the monarch's house?

MESS. Not till I first am well informed if here  
Within the temple be the king or not.

Unbar the gates: to you within I speak;  
And tell your lord that at the portal here  
I stand, and bring him tidings of fresh ills.

THOAS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

THO. Who at the temple of the goddess dares  
This clamour raise, and thund'ring at the gates  
Strikes terror through the ample space within?

MESS. With falsehoods would these women drive me hence,  
Without to seek thee; thou wast in the shrine.

THO. With what intent? Or what advantage sought?

MESS. Of these hereafter: what more urgent now  
Imports thee, hear: the virgin, in this place  
Presiding at the altars, from this land  
Is with the strangers fled, and bears with her  
The sacred image of the goddess: all  
Of her ablutions but a false pretence.

THO. How sayst thou? What is her accursed design?

MESS. To save Orestes: this too will amaze thee.

THO. Whom? What Orestes? Clytemnestra's son?

MESS. Him at the altar hallowed now to bleed.

THO. Portentous ! For what less can it be called ?

MESS. Think not on that, but hear me ; with deep thought

Reflect ; weigh well what thou shalt hear, devise  
By what pursuit to reach and seize the strangers.

THO. Speak : thou advisest well ; the sea though nigh,  
They fly not so as to escape my spear.

MESS. When to the shore we came, where stationed rode  
The galley of Orestes by the rocks  
Concealed, to us, whom thou hadst sent with her  
To hold the strangers' chains, the royal maid  
Made signs that we retire, and stand aloof,  
As if with secret rites she would perform  
The purposed expiation : on she went,  
In her own hands holding the strangers' chains  
Behind them : not without suspicion this,  
Yet by thy servants, king, allowed. At length,  
That we might deem her in some purpose high  
Employed, she raised her voice, and chaunted loud  
Barbaric strains, as if with mystic rites  
She cleansed the stain of blood. When we had sate  
A tedious while, it came into our thought  
That from their chains unloosed the stranger youths  
Might kill her, and escape by flight ; yet fear  
Of seeing what we ought not kept us still  
In silence ; but at length we all resolved  
To go, though not permitted, where they were.  
There we behold the Grecian bark, with oars  
Well furnished, winged for flight ; and at their seats  
Grasping their oars were fifty rowers ; free  
From chains beside the stern the two youths stood.  
Some from the prow relieved the keel with poles ;  
Some weighed the anchors up ; the climbing ropes  
Some hastened, through their hands the cables drew,  
Launched the light bark, and gave her to the main.  
But when we saw their treacherous wiles, we rushed  
Heedless of danger, seized the priestess, seized  
The halsers, hung upon the helm, and strove  
To rend the rudder-bands away. Debate



Now rose : "What mean you, sailing o'er the seas,  
The statue and the priestess from the land  
By stealth conveying? Whence art thou, and who,  
That bearest her, like a purchased slave, away?"  
He said : "I am her brother, be of this  
Informed, Orestes, son of Agamemnon ;  
My sister, so long lost, I bear away,  
Recovered here." But nought the less for that  
Held we the priestess, and by force would lead  
Again to thee ; hence dreadful on our cheeks  
The blows ; for in their hands no sword they held,  
Nor we ; but many a rattling stroke the youths  
Dealt with their fists, against our sides and breasts  
Their arms fierce darting, till our battered limbs  
Were all disabled. Now with dreadful marks  
Disfigured up the precipice we fly,  
Some bearing on their heads, some in their eyes  
The bloody bruises ; standing on the heights  
Our fight was safer, and we hurled at them  
Fragments of rocks ; but standing on the stern  
The archers with their arrows drove us thence.  
And now a swelling wave rolled in, which drove  
The galley tow'rs the land ; the sailors feared  
The sudden swell. On his left arm sustained  
Orestes bore his sister through the tide,  
Mounted the bark's tall side, and on the deck  
Safe placed her, and Diana's holy image  
Which fell from heaven : from the midship his voice  
He sent aloud, "Ye youths, that in this bark  
From Argos ploughed the deep, now ply your oars,  
And dash the billows till they foam : those things  
Are ours, for which we swept the Euxine sea,  
And steered our course within its clashing rocks."  
They gave a cheerful shout, and with their oars  
Dashed the salt wave. The galley, whilst it rode  
Within the harbour, worked its easy way ;  
But having passed its mouth, the swelling flood  
Rolled on it, and with sudden force the wind  
Impetuous rising drove it back ; their oars

They slack'd not, stoutly struggling 'gainst the wave ;  
But tow'rd's the land the reflux flood impelled  
The galley ; then the royal virgin stood,  
And prayed : " O daughter of Latona, save me,  
Thy priestess save ; from this barbaric land  
To Greece restore me, and forgive my thefts ;  
For thou, O goddess, dost thy brother love,  
Deem then that I love those allied to me."

The mariners responsive to her prayer  
Shouted loud pæans, and their naked arms,  
Each cheering each, to their stout oars apply.  
But nearer, and yet nearer to the rock  
The galley drove ; some rushed into the sea,  
Some strained the ropes that bind the loosened sails.  
Straight was I hither sent to thee, O king,  
T' inform thee of these accidents. But haste,  
Take chains and gyves with thee ; for if the flood  
Subside not to a calm, there is no hope  
Of safety to the strangers. Be assured  
That Neptune, awful monarch of the main,  
Remembers Troy, and, hostile to the race  
Of Pelops, will deliver to thy hands,  
And to thy people, as is meet, the son  
Of Agamemnon ; and bring back to thee  
His sister, who the goddess hath betrayed,  
Unmindful of the blood at Aulis shed.

CHOR. Unhappy Iphigenia, thou must die,  
Thy brother too must die, if thou again,  
Seized in thy flight, to thy lord's hands shalt come.

THO. Inhabitants of this barbaric land,  
Will you not rein your steeds, will you not fly  
Along the shore, to seize whate'er this skiff  
Of Greece casts forth, and for your goddess roused  
Hunt down these impious men ? Will you not launch  
Instant your swift-oared barks, by sea, by land  
To catch them, from the rugged rock to hurl  
Their bodies, or impale them on the stake ?  
But for you women, in these dark designs  
Accomplices, hereafter, as I find

Convenient leisure, I will punish you.  
Th' occasion urges now, and gives no pause.

MIN. Whither, O royal Thoas, dost thou lead  
This vengeful chase? Attend; Minerva speaks.  
Cease thy pursuit, and stop this rushing flood  
Of arms; for hither by the fateful voice  
Of Phœbus came Orestes, warned to fly  
The anger of the Furies, to convey  
His sister to her native Argos back,  
And to my land the sacred image bear.  
Thoas, I speak to thee: him, whom thy rage  
Would kill, Orestes, on the wild waves seized,  
Neptune, to do me grace, already wafts  
On the smooth sea, the swelling surges calmed.  
And thou, Orestes, for my voice thou hearest,  
Though distant far, to my commands attend:  
Go, with the sacred image, which thou bearest,  
And with thy sister: but when thou shalt come  
To Athens, built by gods, there is a place  
On th' extreme borders of the Attic land,  
Close neighb'ring to Carystia's craggy height,  
Sacred, my people call it Alæ: there  
A temple raise, and fix the statue there,  
Which from the Tauric goddess shall receive  
Its name, and from thy toils, which thou, through Greece  
Driven by the Furies' madd'ning stings, hast borne;  
And mortals shall in future times with hymns  
The Tauric goddess there, Diana, hail.  
And be this law established, when the feast  
For thy deliverance from this shrine is held,  
To a man's throat that they apply the sword,  
And draw the blood, in memory of these rites,  
That of her honours nought the goddess lose.  
Thou, Iphigenia, on the hallowed heights  
Of Brauron on this goddess shalt attend  
Her priestess, dying shalt be there interred,  
Graced with the honours of the gorgeous vests  
Of finest texture, in their houses left  
By matrons who in childbed pangs expired.

These Grecian dames back to their country lead,  
I charge thee : justice this return demands ;  
For I saved thee, when on the mount of Mars  
The votes were equal : and from that decree,  
The shells in number equal, still absolve.  
But, son of Agamemnon, from this land  
Thy sister bear ; nor, Thoas, be thou angry.

THO. Royal Minerva, he that hears the gods  
Commanding, and obeys not, is unwise.  
My anger 'gainst Orestes flames no more,  
Gone though he be, and bears with him away  
The statue of the goddess, and his sister.  
Have mortals glory 'gainst the powerful gods  
Contending ? Let them go, and to thy land  
The sacred image bear, and fix it there ;  
Good fortune go with them. To favoured Greece  
These dames, at thy high bidding, I will send.  
My arms will I restrain, which I had raised  
Against the strangers, and my swift-oared barks,  
Since, potent goddess, this is pleasing to thee.

MIN. I praise thy resolution ; for the power  
Of fate o'er thee and o'er the gods prevails.  
Breathe soft ye fav'ring gales, to Athens bear  
These sprung from Agamemnon ; on their course  
Attending I will go, and heedful save  
My sister's sacred image. You too go [*to the CHORUS*]  
Prosp'rous, and in the fate that guards you blest.

CHOR. O thou, among th' immortal gods revered,  
And mortal men, Minerva, we will do  
As thou commandest ; for with transport high,  
Exceeding hope, our ears receive thy words.  
O Victory, I revere thy awful power :  
Guard thou my life, nor ever cease to crown me !

## THE TROJAN DAMES.

---

A MIGHTY kingdom overturned, its imperial city wasted and levelled with the ground, its venerable king, his numerous sons, and all the brave defenders of their country fallen by the sword, their unhappy wives captive and assigned to slavery in a foreign land, are events of such complicated misery as must deeply affect the human heart. Euripides knew how to give these woes their full force : his tender and pathetic spirit raises here the most exquisite sensations of pity, which increase to terror, and swell on to distraction. One would have thought that the real existence of evils could not be greater, and that the imagination could not form a deeper distress than that of Hecuba on her first appearance, lying on the ground before the tent of Agamemnon : but every new scene presents her with some new cause of grief of the most affecting nature ; the gradation is astonishing ; and the whole drama resembles a terrible storm whose fury falls upon some magnificent edifice. At first it is awful and alarming ; but its violence increases, every flash of lightning sets some part of the structure on fire, every clap of thunder shakes some part to the ground, till at length the whole is one dreadful scene of tempest, flames, and ruin.

The scene is in the plains of Troy, before the tent of Agamemnon.

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## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

NEPTUNE.

MINERVA.

HECUBA.

CASSANDRA

ANDROMACHE.

HELENA.

MENELAUS.

TALTHYBIUS.

CHORUS OF TROJAN DAMES.

## NEPTUNE.

FROM the vast depths of the *Ægean* sea,  
 Where many a maze with graceful-moving feet  
 Unwinds the choir of Nereids, Neptune comes.  
 For from the time when Phœbus and myself  
 Raised on this land the rampired towers of Troy  
 With exact skill, my mind hath never lost  
 Its fondness for this city of the Phrygians,  
 Which now in ruins by the arms of Greece  
 Smokes on the ground : for by Minerva's art  
 Epœus of Parnassian Phocis framed  
 A horse, whose hollow womb was full of arms,  
 And sent within the walls th' enormous bulk  
 Big with destruction ; hence in after times  
 It shall be called "The Horse of Spears," the spear  
 In its dark sides concealed. The sacred groves  
 Are desolate, the temples of the gods  
 Flooded with gore, and Priam at the steps  
 Ascending to the shrine of guardian Jove  
 Hath fall'n and died : much gold, and Phrygian spoils  
 Are to the Grecian vessels borne ; the troops  
 Expect the fav'ring gale to breathe from shore,  
 That after ten long years, which they have passed  
 In arms to lay this city low, with joy  
 They may behold their children and their wives.  
 But I, by Argive Juno, mighty queen,  
 O'erpowered, and Pallas, whose united force  
 Hath crushed the Phrygians, quit the once famed towers

Of Ilium, and my altars : for when once  
 Wide through a city desolation spreads,  
 The hallowed rites, the worship of the gods  
 Must be neglected. Now with loud laments  
 Of captive dames to their new lords assigned  
 Scamander's banks resound : th' Arcadian some,  
 Some the Thessalian bands, and some the sons  
 Of Theseus, chiefs of Athens, as decides  
 The lot, obtain. Beneath this roof are those  
 Of Troy's unhappy daughters by no lot  
 Disposed, but to the leaders of the host  
 Selected ; these among, by righteous doom  
 A captive led, the Spartan Helena.  
 And Hecuba, if any wish to see  
 Her and her wretched state, before the gates  
 Lies stretched, and pours an ample flood of tears ;  
 And she hath ample cause, for at the tomb  
 Raised to Achilles hath her daughter died,  
 How piteously ! the poor Polyxena ;  
 Priam is fall'n, her sons are fall'n ; and her,  
 Cassandra, whom the royal Phœbus gave  
 To rove a virgin, and declare the fates,  
 To secret nuptials Agamemnon leads  
 Perforce, religion and the gods despised.  
 But, O my town once flourishing, once crowned  
 With beauteous-structured battlements, farewell !  
 Had not Minerva sunk thee in the dust,  
 On thy firm base e'en now thou mightst have stood.

## NEPTUNE, MINERVA.

MIN. Is it permitted me, all former thoughts  
 Of variance laid aside, t' address a god  
 Nearest by lineage to my sire allied,  
 Of mighty power, and honoured by the gods ?

NEPT. It is permitted thee : for kindred blood,  
 Royal Minerva, hath a potent charm  
 To reconcile the alienated mind.

MIN. Thy gentleness in anger claims my praise  
 What I would offer, king, imports us both.

NEPT. Hast thou of new aught from the gods to speak,  
From Jove, or other of the heavenly powers?

MIN. No: for the sake of Troy I to thy power  
Am come, to use it in one common cause.

NEPT. Dost thou, thy former hostile thoughts appeased,  
Pity its ruins blazing in the flames?

MIN. First speak to this: wilt thou with joint design,  
Joint labour, aid in what I wish to do?

NEPT. Most willingly: but wish to know thy purpose,  
If to the Trojans friendly, or to Greece.

MIN. The Trojans hated once, would I delight,  
To th' Argive host embittering their return.

NEPT. Why have thy measures this quick change, in love  
Or hate, whichever betides, too violent?

MIN. Me knowst thou not how outraged, and my shrine?

NEPT. I know: Cassandra Ajax dragged by force.

MIN. Nor punished by the Grecians, nor reprov'd.

NEPT. Yet by thy power these Grecians wasted Troy.

MIN. Therefore with thee I now would work them woe.

NEPT. Thy purpose finds me prompt: what wouldst thou do?

MIN. With rig'rous vengeance sadden their return.

NEPT. On land, or when they plough the briny wave?

MIN. When o'er the deep they steer their course for Greece,  
The stormy rain, the fierce-descending hail,  
And the dark fury of tempestuous winds  
My sire will send: to me, his word is passed,  
His fiery thunder will he give, to hurl  
Against the Grecians, and with lightning flames  
To burn their ships. Do thou, for thine the power,  
With foaming billows vast and whirling gulfs  
Tempest the vexed Ægean; with their dead  
Fill the Eubœan bay: that they may learn  
Henceforth with reverence to approach my shrines.  
And pay due honours to the other gods.

NEPT. It shall be so: few words this favour needs.  
With tempests will I chafe th' Ægean sea;  
The shores of Mycone, the Delian rocks,  
Scyrus, and Lemnus, and the rugged brow  
Of steep Caphareus shall with numerous dead



Be covered. But to high Olympus go,  
The bolts of thunder from thy father's hands  
Receive: then wait till they unmoor their fleet.  
Unwise is he, whoe'er of mortals storms  
Beleaguered towns, and crushed in ruins wastes  
The temples of the gods, the hallowed tombs  
Where sleep the dead; for he shall perish soon.

HEC. Rise, thou unhappy; from the cold ground raise  
Thy head, thy neck. This is no longer Troy,  
In Troy we rule no longer. Ah the change  
Of fortune! Bear the change; sail with the tide.  
With fortune sail, nor turn the prow of life  
Against the wave, nor struggle with thy fate.—  
Oh woe, woe, woe! Why is it not allowed  
A wretch like me to moan my country lost,  
My children, and my husband! Thou high boast  
Of noble ancestry, how art thou shrunk,  
How vanished! What shall I in silence hold?  
Or what not hold in silence? What bewail?  
In what a woful state are these poor limbs  
Reclined, how ill on this hard bed now stretched?  
Ah me, my head! Ah me, my temples! Ah,  
My sides! O how I long to change my place,  
To roll, and roll, and shift from side to side,  
Proofs of the restless torture of my mind!  
E'en here th' unhappy have a Muse, to give  
These woes a voice, far other than the notes  
To joy and dance attuned. Ye wingéd barks,  
Which through the purple seas and sheltered bays  
Of Greece, whilst to the inauspicious sound  
Of flutes and oaten pipes your oars kept time,  
With all your streamers flying, proudly sailed  
To sacred Ilium, to the ports of Troy  
Bringing the hated wife of Menelaus,  
A foul disgrace to Castor, and a stain  
Dishonouring Eurotas. She hath slain  
Priam, the reverend sire of fifty children,  
And in this gulf of misery hath plunged  
The wretched Hecuba. My seat is now—

Ah, what a seat !—at Agamemnon's tent ;  
 And I am led, in my old age am led  
 A captive from my house, of its hoar hairs,  
 Sad argument of grief, this head despoiled.  
 But, O ye wretched wives of Trojans once  
 Valiant in war, ye virgins, and ye brides  
 Torn from your loves, Troy smokes : let us lament ;  
 And, as the parent bird that o'er her young  
 Swells her shrill notes, I will begin the strain,  
 Not such as in my happier days I raised,  
 Leaning on Priam's sceptre, when my foot  
 In Phrygian measures, by the Graces taught,  
 Led to th' immortal gods the festive dance.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Why, Hecuba, these cries, these cries of woe ?  
 Why dost thou raise these loud laments ? I hear  
 The wailings, which thou utterest, o'er these roofs  
 Resound ; and terror strikes each Trojan dame,  
 That in this tent bemoans her slavery.

HEC. O children, in the vessels of the Greeks  
 The hand now grasps the oar. O wretched me,  
 What will they do ? Will they with spreading sails  
 Far from my country bear my hapless age ?

CHOR. I know not ; but my mind presages ill.  
 Alas, alas, distracted with our woes,  
 Soon we shall hear, " Ye Trojan dames, come forth.  
 The Grecians are preparing their return."

HEC. Ah, send not now the mad Cassandra to me,  
 That shame to Greece : her ravings to my woe  
 Would add fresh woe. O Troy, unhappy Troy,  
 Thou art no more. Unhappy they who leave thee,  
 Unhappy are the living and the slain.

CHOR. Ah me ! With trembling foot I leave the tent  
 Of Agamemnon, from thee, queen, to learn  
 Whether the sentence of the Greeks be passed  
 To kill me, wretched me ; or in the ships  
 The sailors are prepared to plough the main.

HEC. Early, my child, my soul with terror struck,  
Was I brought hither; from the Grecians now  
A herald comes informing me to whom  
I am assigned—ah wretched me!—a slave.

CHOR. Soon will thy lot be cast.

HEC. Ah me! Ah me!

CHOR. Me, miserable me, what Argive leads,  
Or who of Phthia's vales, or of the isles  
Encircled by the ocean, far from Troy?

HEC. To whom am I, unhappy, in what land  
Assigned a slave, useless, worn out with age,  
The wretched form of one that is no more,  
A lifeless image on a monument?

To keep their gates will they assign my charge?  
Or on their children shall my office be  
T' attend, at Troy with royal honours graced?

CHOR. Ah, with what plaints thy miseries dost thou scan?

HEC. No more these hands in the Idaean looms  
The shuttle with alternate cast shall throw:  
No more my children's sportive youth I see;  
Nor, as in youth, shall I to lighter toils  
Be destined, or approach some Grecian's bed:  
The night itself and fortune cheerless frowns.  
But at Pirene's fount shall be my task,  
My wretched task, to draw its sacred streams.

CHOR. Oh, to that happy country might we come,  
O'er which th' illustrious Theseus held his reign!

HEC. But never to Therapnæ, hated town  
Of Helen, seated where Eurotas whirls  
His eddying stream; exposed my servile state  
To Menelaus, who wasted sacred Troy.  
The lovely tract, through which Peneus flows,  
Delightful base, from which his awful height  
Olympus rears, in wealth, so fame reports,  
Abounds, and boasts its blooming fruitfulness.  
This, next the honoured and divine domains  
Where Theseus reigned, would be most pleasing to me.  
Much have I heard of the Ætnæan coast  
Sacred to Vulcan, to the Punic shore

That rises opposite, the mighty mother  
 Of the Sicilian mountains, where the wreath  
 Blooms ever fresh ; and of the neighbouring land,  
 Sweet habitation in th' Ionian sea,  
 Irriguous with the beauteous-flowing stream  
 Of Crathis, which the yellow tresses gilds,  
 And blessings from its sacred fountains pours  
 Through a rich land, that boasts a generous race.

CHOR. But from the Grecian host a herald comes,  
 Fraught with fresh tidings : hasty is his step.  
 What brings he ? what announces ? For in truth  
 We of the Dorian land e'en now are slaves.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA. CHORUS.

TALT. Thou, Hecuba, hast seen Talthybius oft  
 In Troy, a herald from the Grecian host  
 In frequent intercourse : but now to thee,  
 In past time not unknown, I come, and bring  
 The public mandate, which concerns you all.

HEC. This, this, my friends, ye dames of Troy, long  
 since  
 This was my fear.

TALT. You are by lot assigned,  
 If this was what you feared.

HEC. Alas, alas !  
 To what Thessalian, or what Phthian town,  
 Or to Cadmæan Thebes ? I pray thee tell me.

TALT. Singly to single chiefs are you allotted,  
 And not together all.

HEC. To whom, to whom  
 Am I appointed, say.—What happy fate  
 Awaits each Trojan dame ?

TALT. I can inform thee :  
 But singly ask of each, not all at once.

HEC. The poor Cassandra, my unhappy daughter,  
 Where falls her lot ?

TALT. Her, a selected prize,  
 The royal Agamemnon hath received.

HEC. What ! For his Spartan spouse a slave ? Ah me !

TALT. No : but in secret to the nuptial bed.

HEC. The virgin of Apollo, whom the god  
Radiant with golden locks allowed to live  
In her pure vow of maiden chastity !

TALT With love the raptured virgin smote his heart.

HEC. Cast from thee, O my daughter, cast away  
Thy sacred wand, rend off the honoured wreaths,  
The splendid ornaments that grace thy brows.

TALT. Is it not great to share a monarch's bed?

HEC. But where is she, whom late you took from me,  
Where is my daughter?

TALT. Of Polyxena,  
Or of whom else is this inquiry made?

HEC. To whom is she allotted?

TALT. At the tomb  
Raised to Achilles it is hers to serve.

HEC. Unhappy me! Have I brought forth a child  
Doomed at a tomb to serve? But tell me, friend.  
What custom or what rite of Greece is this?

TALT. Pronounce her happy : all with her is well.

HEC. What mean thy words? Views she the sun's bright beams?

TALT. Her doth fate hold from every ill released.

HEC. What of Andromache, the wretched wife  
Of helméd Hector? Tell me what her fate?

TALT. Her without lot Achilles' son receives.

HEC. And I, whose age-enfeebled limbs require  
A staff, to whom am I assigned a slave?

TALT. Thee hath Ulysses, king of Ithaca,  
By lot obtained : to him thou art a slave.

HEC. Ah, let me beat this head, and rend these cheeks.  
O miserable me! I am enslaved

To a detested, an insidious foe,  
A creeping viper, who with baleful bite  
Impoisons justice ; one, whose double tongue  
With glozing arguments from side to side  
All things perverts, and turns to hostile hate  
What was before most friendly. Mourn for m

Ye Trojan dames, for I am wretched, sunk  
To the most abject fortune, woe is me,  
Totally sunk by this ill-fated lot.

CHOR. Thy fortune, venerable queen, I know ;  
But mine what Argive or what Greek commands ?

TALT. Go, ye attendants ; with what speed you may  
Conduct Cassandra hither ; I must give her  
To the king's hand. The other captives then,  
Each as allotted, lead to their new lords.—  
But what is this ? Why flames the blazing torch  
Within ? What mean these Trojan dames ? To fire  
The inmost tent ? that, since the hour draws nigh  
When from this land they must perforce be borne  
To Argos, they may perish in the flames,  
Seeking to die ; ill brooks th' excessive love  
Of freedom woes like these. Open these doors,  
Open, lest what to these may give delight,  
And grief to Greece, may to my blame be charged.

HEC. It is not so ; they raise no flames ; but forth  
My frenetic child, Cassandra, rushes to us.

CASSANDRA, HECUBA, TALTHYBIUS, CHORUS.

CASS. Wave the torch, and spread its light ;  
Thus I bear it blazing bright,  
Rev'rence and illume the shrine ;  
Royal Hymen, it is thine.  
See, the happy bridegroom see,  
And the happy bride in me :  
At Argos I shall mount the nuptial bed,  
Royal Hymen, by thee led.  
Since thy tears, my mother, flow,  
And thy heart is rent with woe,  
For my slaughtered father's fate,  
And my country's ruined state,  
At my spousals I will raise  
A fire shall shine, shall flame, shall blaze,  
And, royal Hymen, on the bridal night  
Give to Hecate the light,

For a virgin's nuptial bands ;  
 Sacred custom this demands.  
 Nimble let your feet advance,  
 Quiv'ring high in festive dance,  
 As if Priam's prosperous throne  
 Bright with royal splendours shone.  
 The choir is hallowed : with them, Picebus, move :  
 In thy sacred laurel grove  
 Off'rings at thy shrine I lay,  
 Hymen, 'tis my bridal day.  
 Lead the dance, my mother, lead,  
 Quick in varying motions tread,  
 And, my gliding steps to grace,  
 Light the mazy measure trace. .  
 To royal Hymen raise, O hallowed train,  
 Raise the joy-announcing strain ;  
 Hail the bride with songs of joy,  
 Gorgeous-vested nymphs of Troy ;  
 Hail the bridegroom, to my bed  
 By the Fates' appointment led.

CHOR. Wilt thou not, queen, thy raving daughter hold,  
 That she appear not 'midst the host of Greece  
 Possessed with this indecent levity ?

HEC. O Vulcan, thou indeed the nuptial torch  
 Of mortals bearest, but a baleful flame  
 Dost thou now wave, and void of each fond hope.  
 Alas, my daughter, little did I think  
 That ever thou shouldst wed beneath the spear,  
 Beneath the arms of Greece ! Give me the torch ;  
 If it beseems thee frenetic thus, with step  
 Thus wild, to bear its flame : nor to thy mind  
 Have thy misfortunes brought more sober sense ;  
 But, my poor child, thy state remains the same.  
 Bear in the torches ; and, ye Trojan dames,  
 For tears exchange her nuptial melody.

CASS. Mother, adorn my head ; for I have gained  
 A conquest : in my nuptials with a king  
 Rejoice. Come, lead me. If I go too slow,  
 Push me by force ; for this is not Apollo.

Th' illustrious Agamemnon, king of Greece,  
Weds me ; but in these nuptials he shall find  
More woe than Paris when he wedded Helen ;  
For I will kill him, and lay waste his house ;  
Thus for my brothers' and my father's death  
I will have vengeance : but no words of this :  
I will say nothing of the axe, which goes  
Into my neck, and that of others too ;  
Nor of the contest where a mother bleeds  
(This shall my nuptials raise) ; nor of the house  
Of Atreus sunk in ruins : I will show  
This city than the Grecians far more blest  
(I feel th' inspiring god, but will awhile  
Bid the prophetic fury cease to swell) :  
They for one woman, and one fatal bed  
Sought Helen, and lost thousands ; their wise chief  
Himself, to gain what most the soul abhors,  
Hath thrown away what most it loves, and given  
The sweet domestic pleasures of his children  
To win his brother's wife ; yet was she borne  
Consentingly, not forcibly away.  
When to Scamander's banks they came, they died ;  
Nor from their country, or its high-tow'red towns,  
Were they driven forth : those whom the sword destroyed  
Their children saw no more, nor were their limbs  
By their wives' hands in decent vestments wrapt,  
But in a foreign land they lie. At home  
Like desolation reigns : their widowed wives  
Are dead ; their parents, childless, have in vain  
Reared offspring in their houses ; not a son  
Survives to pour libations at their tombs.  
Such are the triumphs of this martial host.  
Deeds of impurity are better hushed  
In silence : never Muse be mine, to chaunt  
What raises on the modest cheek a blush.  
The Trojans, what is glory's brightest grace,  
Died for their country : they, beneath the spear  
Who fell, were by their friends borne home, and dead



Found in their native land a sepulchre,  
Entombed by those from whom those rites were due.  
But such, as fell not in the field, each day  
Dwelt with their wives and children ; whilst the Greeks  
Were strangers to that sweet society.  
Mournful the fate of Hector seems to thee :  
But weigh it well : he dies, among the brave  
Esteemed the bravest ; this high fame the Greeks  
By their arrival raised ; had they not come  
The hero's virtues had remained obscure.  
Paris espoused the daughter of high Jove ;  
Had she not been his bride, he would at home  
Have formed some mean alliance, unrenowned.  
War then the man, whom prudence rules, will shun :  
But if its flames are kindled, no mean crown  
He wins who bravely for his country dies :  
Not to act bravely is inglorious shame.  
Therefore behoves thee, mother, not to wail  
Thy country, or my bed ; for those to thee  
Whose deeds have been most hostile, and to me,  
I by my nuptials to the dust will bow.

CHOR. How sweetly at thy house's ills thou smilest,  
Chaunting what haply thou wilt not show true !

TALT. But that Apollo hath with frenzy hurt  
Thy sense, unpunished with such taunting speech  
Thou shouldst not from this country send the chiefs.  
But what commands respect, and is held high  
As wise, is nothing better than the mean  
Of no repute : for this most potent king  
Of all the Grecians, the much honoured son  
Of Atreus, is enamoured with his prize,  
This frenetic raver. I am a poor man,  
Yet would I not receive her to my bed.  
For thee, since thou hast not thy perfect sense,  
All thy reproaches on the Greeks and all  
Thy praises of the Trojans, to the winds  
I give to scatter them. But to the ships  
Attend me, beauteous minion of our chief.

Thou, since Ulysses wills to lead thee with him,  
Follow ; a virtuous lady shalt thou serve,  
As they, who came to Ilium, speak her fame.

CASS. This is a busy slave. What one name suits  
All heralds ? The abhorrence of mankind,  
Ye ministers of tyrants and of states,  
And dost thou say that to Ulysses' house  
My mother shall be led ? Where are the words  
Of Phœbus then, which say, by me made known,  
Here she shall die ? The rest revile I not :  
But he, unhappy, knows not what a train  
Of sufferings waits him, so that he shall deem  
Mine and the Phrygians' ills, with his compared,  
Treasures of gold : for after ten long years  
To ten long years here wasted, he shall reach  
His native land alone ; but visit first  
The straits, amidst whose gulfs, that now disgorge  
And now resorb the floods, Charybdis holds  
Her terrible abode ; the blood-stained cave  
Of the huge Cyclops, mountain savage, gorged  
With flesh where life yet quivers ; Circe's isle,  
Whose charmed cup transforms whoever taste  
To swine ; tempestuous seas with wrecks o'erspread ;  
Men in the flow'ry Lotus who delight ;  
The sacred heifers of the sun, whose flesh  
Shall send forth lowings, to Ulysses sound  
Of horror : to be brief, to Pluto's realms  
Alive shall he descend : and from the waves  
Escaped, returning to his country find  
A thousand ills. But why repeat the toils  
That wait Ulysses ? Go, that I with speed  
May wed a bridegroom in the shades below.  
Thou, who in thought some glorious deed art now  
Achieving, leader of the Grecian host,  
Wretch, shall be buried wretchedly by night,  
Not in the day ; and me, a livid corse,  
Naked, cast out, the torrent floods shall leave  
In their rough channels, nigh my bridegroom's tomb,  
A prey to beasts, this priestess of Apollo.

Ye garlands of the gods, most dear to me,  
 Prophetic ornaments, farewell : the feasts,  
 In which I once delighted, are to me  
 No more. Begone ! I rend you from me. While  
 I yet am chaste, I give them to the winds,  
 To toss, to scatter them, prophetic king !  
 Where is the leader's bark ? How shall my foot  
 Mount its tall sides ? No longer shall thy sails  
 Wait for the breathing gales ; but thou shalt bear me  
 A Fury, an Erinny, from this land.  
 Farewell, my mother ! Do not shed a tear.  
 O my loved country, O my brother, sunk  
 To the dark realms below, O father soon  
 Shall you receive me ; to your shades I come  
 Triumphant from the ruin of the house  
 Of Atreus, by whose sons we thus are fall'n !

## HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Ye, who attend the aged Hecuba,  
 Behold you not the queen, how to the ground  
 Speechless she sinks ? Shall not your hands with care  
 Support her ? Wretches, will you let her age  
 Lie on the earth ? Haste, raise her, upright raise her.

HEC. Forbear, ye virgins ; what was pleasing once  
 Pleases no more : here let me lie thus fall'n,  
 A fall that suits what I have suffered, what  
 I suffer, and shall suffer. O ye gods,  
 Unkind associates I indeed invoke,  
 Yet when affliction rends the anguished heart,  
 We with becoming grace invoke the gods.  
 First it is pleasing to me to recount  
 My happier fortunes : thus my woes shall raise  
 A stronger pity. Royal was my birth,  
 And marriage joined me to a royal house ;  
 There I was mother of illustrious sons,  
 Sons with superior excellence adorned  
 Above the Phrygians ; such no Trojan dame.  
 No Grecian, no Barbarian e'er could boast

These I saw fall'n beneath the Grecian spear,  
And laid my severed tresses on their tomb.  
For Priam too, their father, flowed my tears ;  
His fate I heard not from report, but saw it,  
These eyes beheld him murdered at the altar  
Of guardian Jove ; my vanquished city stormed ;  
My daughters, whom I nurtured high in hope  
Of choosing honourable nuptials for them,  
For others nurtured from my hands are rent ;  
There is no hope that me they e'er shall see,  
And I shall never see them more. Th' extreme,  
The height of my afflicting ills is this :  
I to some house shall go a hoary slave,  
To some base task, most irksome to my age,  
Assigned ; or at their doors to keep the keys  
A portress shall I wait, the mother once  
Of Hector, or to labour at the mill ;  
For royal couches, on the ground to make  
My rugged bed ; and o'er these worn-out limbs  
The tattered remnant of a worn-out robe,  
Unseemly to my happier state, to throw.  
Ah, for one woman's nuptial bed, what woes  
Are mine, and will be mine ! Alas, my child,  
My poor Cassandra, madd'ning with the gods,  
By what misfortunes is thy purity  
Defiled ? And where art thou, Polyxena,  
O thou unhappy ! Thus of all my sons  
And all my daughters, many though they were,  
Not one is left to soothe my miseries.  
Why do you raise me, virgins ? With what hope  
Lead you this foot, which once with stately port  
In Troy advanced, but now a slave, to seek  
A bed of leaves strewn on the ground, a stone  
My pillow, there to lie, to perish there  
Wasted with tears ? Then deem not of the great  
Now flourishing as happy, ere they die.

## CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

For Troy, O Muse, attune thy woe,  
 And steep in tears the solemn-breathing song ;  
 To such a theme such notes belong :  
 For Troy unwonted measures now shall flow,  
 Shall tell my sorrows, how beneath  
 The guileful fabric, big with death,  
 I fell a captive to the Argive spear :  
 When from th' enormous beast, that hides  
 A host within its caverned sides,  
 With golden trappings hung around,  
 Rolled to the gates with thund'ring sound,  
 Issuing in arms the chiefs of Greece appear.  
 But from the rock of Ilium high  
 With shouts the blinded Phrygians cry,  
 "Go, from your toils released, ye sons of Troy.  
 This hallowed fabric draw with joy :  
 To Jove-born Pallas place the pledge divine  
 In favoured Ilium's rampired shrine."  
 The young, the old promiscuous throng,  
 And roll with songs of joy the fraudulent pest along.

*Antistrophe.*

From every street with eager pace,  
 The pines of Ida flaming in their hands,  
 Rush to the gates the Trojan bands,  
 To Pallas in her favoured tower to place  
 The fabric formed with Argive wiles,  
 The pest which Phrygia's state beguiles,  
 The heaven-framed present of the unyoked steed :  
 With twisted cables thrown around  
 They drag it o'er the fatal ground,  
 Like a new bark in gallant state,  
 To Pallas in her rocky seat.  
 To toil and joy the shades of night succeed :

The Libyan pipe swells clear and high,  
 Attuned to Phrygian melody ;  
 To the light notes in many an airy round  
 The frolic virgins nimbly bound,  
 And joyful as they dance their voices raise,  
 Sweet warbling spritely-fancied lays.  
 In every house the blazing fires  
 Sink at the hour of rest, and their swart light expires.

*Epode.*

Then too my vaulted roofs around  
 The voice of joy was heard to sound ;  
 We to Diana raised the strain,  
 Chaste huntress-queen that leads the mountain train.  
 Sudden a wild tumultuous roar  
 With shudd'ring horror strikes our souls :  
 Loud and more loud the city o'er  
 To Pergamus it deep'ning rolls :  
 My dear, dear infants round their mother prest,  
 And grasped with trembling hands my vest.  
 Now, by Minerva's guardian care,  
 Rushed from its ambush the imprisoned war :  
 Round the polluted altars slain  
 In blood are rolled the sons of Troy :  
 O'er the rich rooms, once scenes of joy,  
 Horror and desolation reign,  
 And bear to Greece, her victor sons t' adorn,  
 The crown from weeping Phrygia borne.

HECUBA, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

CHOR. See, royal lady, on this foreign car  
 Andromache is borne ; and at her breast,  
 Which trembles to the motion of the wheels,  
 Astyanax, the son of Hector, laid.

HEC. Whither, unhappy woman, art thou borne,  
 Placed in that car beside the brazen arms

Of Hector, and the spoils by the strong spear  
Rent from the Phrygians? Distant far from Troy  
In Phthia these the proud son of Achilles  
Shall hang, to crown the temples of the gods.

ANDR. My Grecian lords force me away.

HEC.

Ah me!

ANDR. Why dost thou heave my sighs?

HEC.

Ah wretched me!

ANDR. That for my sorrows—

HEC.

Seest thou this, O Jove!

ANDR. And my distresses rise.

HEC.

Alas, my children!

ANDR. We were thy children once.

HEC.

My state is fall'n;

Troy too is fall'n.

ANDR.

Unhappy!

HEC.

And my sons,

My noble sons are fall'n.

ANDR.

Alas, alas!

HEC. Alas my ills, the miserable fate

ANDR. Of ruined Troy.

HEC.

Which smokes upon the ground.

ANDR. Oh, wouldst thou come, my husband!

HEC.

Thou dost call

My son, unhappy, in the realms below!

ANDR. Thou bulwark of thy wife!

HEC.

And thou, whose soul

Swelled high against the Grecians, Priam, once

The aged father of my children, lead,

O lead me to the gloomy realms below!

CHOR. These griefs are great.

HEC.

And dreadful are the ills

We suffer.

CHOR. For thy ruined country: woes,

Such is the pleasure of the gods, succeed

To woes. Nor hath thy son escaped from death,

Who for a bed abhorred hath sunk in dust

The towers of Troy, and near the rampired rock

Of Pallas stretched the bodies of the slain,

Welt'ring in blood, by vultures to be torn :  
And Troy is bowed beneath the servile yoke.

HEC. My country, my unhappy country, thee  
Wasted I weep.

CHOR.                   Thou seest its wretched end.

HEC. And thee my house, where oft I was a mother.

CHOR. Unhappy children, wasted is your town,  
Your mother desolate.

HEC.                   What strains are these,  
What strains of woe ! Tears after tears stream down  
In sorrow for my house : the dead forgets  
His sorrows, and his tears stream down no more.

CHOR. How sweet are tears to those who suffer ills ?  
Sweet are the strains of lamentation, sweet  
The mournful Muse that tunes her notes to woe.

ANDR. Mother of Hector, that brave chief, whose spear  
Once pierced the Grecian squadrons, seest thou this ?

HEC. I see th' appointment of the gods ; the low  
How they exalt, and hurl the mighty down.

ANDR. I, with my child, am led away, the spoil  
Of war : th' illustrious progeny of kings,  
O fatal change, is sunk to slavery.

HEC. Necessity is rig'rous : from me late  
Cassandra went, torn from my arms by force.

ANDR. Alas ! Another Ajax then, it seems,  
Thy daughter finds : but thou hast other ills.

HEC. Unmeasured and unnumbered are my ills :  
Afflictions with afflictions still contend.

ANDR. Polyxena, thy daughter, is no more :  
Devoted to Achilles, on his tomb  
An offering to the lifeless dead she fell.

HEC. Ah wretched me ! This was the dread event  
Talthybius hinted to me in dark terms.

ANDR. I saw her, and descending from this car  
Wrapt the vests round her, and bewailed her dead.

HEC. Alas, my daughter, what unhallowed rites !  
Alas, alas ! unseemly hast thou perished.

ANDR. She perished, as she perished : but her fate  
In death is happier far than mine who live.



HEC. 'Tis not one thing, my child, to live or die :  
The living hopes await, the dead are nothing.

ANDR. Hear, that with pleasure I may touch thy soul  
Not to be born, I argue, and to die,  
Are equal : but to die is better far  
Than to live wretched ; for he knows not grief  
Who hath no sense of misery : but to fall  
From fortune's blessed height, to the low state  
Of abject wretchedness, distracts the soul  
With the keen sense of former happiness.  
Like as the light of life she ne'er had seen,  
Polyxena is dead, and of her ills  
Knows nothing : I, who aimed at glorious rank,  
And reached my aim, from fortune widely erred :  
All that to prudent matrons gives a grace,  
In Hector's house was ever my employ.  
First, for in this to women blame is due,  
Charged or not charged, to such as rove abroad,  
I checked this wand'ring humour, and remained  
At home, within my house ; nor gay discourse  
Of females there admitted, but intent  
On ordering what was useful, deemed myself  
Well occupied. With silence of the tongue  
And cheerfulness of look I entertained  
My husband : where my province to command  
I knew, and where to yield obedience to him.  
The fame of this was bruited through the host  
Of Greece, and wrought my ruin ; for the son  
Of fierce Achilles, soon as I was made  
A captive, wished to take me as his wife,  
Doomed in the house of those, whose slaught'ring hands  
I rue, to be a slave. From my fond heart  
Could I rend Hector, and expand my breast  
To this new husband, faithless to the dead  
Should I appear : if I disdain his love,  
I shall excite the malice of my lords.  
Short time, they say, to a new lord disarms  
A woman's hate : but her my soul abhors,  
Who for new nuptials slights her former husband,

And loves another : e'en the social steed,  
Divided from its fellow, draws the yoke  
Reluctant ; yet the beast, by nature formed  
Less excellent, nor speech nor reason knows.  
O my loved Hector, I was blest in thee,  
Thou wast the lord of all my wishes, great  
In understanding, noble birth, and wealth,  
And valour : from my father's house thou first  
Ledd'st me a virgin to the bridal bed :  
Now thou are perished, and I mount the bark  
For Greece, a captive to the servile yoke.  
Hath not the death then of Polyxena,  
Whom thou bewailest, lighter ills than mine !  
For not to me e'en Hope, which still is left  
To all of mortal race, remains ; no thought  
That better fortune e'er will visit me  
With pleasing expectation cheats my mind.

CHOR. Alike our suff'rings ; and thou teachest me,  
Thine own ills wailing, my unhappy state.

HEC. I never entered bark ; my knowledge springs  
From what in picture I have seen, or heard  
From others. When a storm, whose moderate force  
May be sustained, the curling billows swells,  
With prompt alacrity the sailors toil  
To guide the vessel safe ; one at the helm  
His station takes, one tends the sails, one plies  
The pump : but if the wild tempestuous sea  
Mocks their vain efforts, they to fortune yield,  
And leave her to the rolling of the waves.  
So fares it now with me : with various ills  
Encompassed I am silent, give them way,  
And check my vain complaints ; for from the gods  
This cruel storm o'erpowers me. But do thou,  
O my loved child, on Hector's fate no more  
Fix thy sad thoughts ; not all thy streaming tears  
Will save him : honour then thy present lord,  
And with thy gentle manners win his soul ;  
This doing, thou shalt cheer thy friends, and train  
This child, my Hector's son, to manhood, strong

To succour Troy ; that sons from him may spring,  
 Who shall again the towers of Ilium raise,  
 And once more to its state restore the town.  
 But trouble yet perchance from trouble springs ;  
 This Grecian officer I see again  
 Advancing to us, bearing new commands.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

TALT. Thou wife of Hector, of the Phrygians once  
 The bravest, do not hate me : for my tongue  
 Unwillingly will utter what the Greeks  
 Decree and the Pelopidæ command.

ANDR. Why with this tragic proem dost thou greet me ?

TALT. It is decreed thy son—how shall I speak it !

ANDR. What ? that he have not the same lord with me ?

TALT. None of the Grecians e'er shall be his lord.

ANDR. To leave him here, a relic of the Trojans ?

TALT. I cannot utter, but with pain, thy ills.

ANDR. I praise thy modest awe, speak thou but good.

TALT. This great ill thou must know : they slay thy son.

ANDR. This than my marriage is a greater ill.

TALT. Ulysses 'midst th' assembled Greeks prevails.

ANDR. Ah, these are ills too grievous to be borne.

TALT. Not to bring up a valiant warrior's son.

ANDR. Thus for his own sons may his voice prevail !

TALT. But that they cast him from the towers of Troy.

In this sad trial be thy prudence shown :

Withhold him not, with noble fortitude

Support thy griefs : nor think that thou hast power,

Where all thou canst is nothing. Thou canst find

No succour : it behoves thee weigh this well.

Low lies thy city, low thy husband lies,

Thou art a captive : we have force enough

Against one woman. Wish not then to strive ;

Let no indecent, no despiteful deed

Dishonour thee. Nor would I have thee vent

Thy curses on the Greeks ; for shouldst thou speak

What shall disgust the troops, thy son perchance

May lie unpitied, and denied the rites  
Of sepulture : but if thou bear thine ills  
In silence and with fortitude, his corse  
Will not be left unburied, and thyself  
Wilt from the Grecians find more courtesy.

ANDR. O my dear child, my fondly cherished son,  
Thou by the foes shalt die, ah me ! and leave  
Thy wretched mother. Yes, thy father's worth  
Shall kill thee, which to others is a shield  
Yielding protection. In an evil hour  
For thee thy father's virtues are renowned.  
O my unhappy bed, and nuptial rites,  
Which led me to the house of Hector, there  
Not to be mother of a son to fall  
A victim by the Grecians, but to reign  
Lord of the fruitful Asia ! Dost thou weep,  
My son ? Hast thou a sense of thy ill fate ?  
Why dost thou clasp me with thy hands, why hold  
My robes, and shelter thee beneath my wings  
Like a young bird ? No more my Hector comes  
Returning from the tomb, he grasps no more  
His glitt'ring spear, bringing protection to thee .  
No more thy father's kindred, or the force  
Of the brave Phrygians : but from Ilium's height,  
By merciless hands hurled headlong, shalt thou fall,  
And crushed breathe out thy life. O soft embrace,  
And to thy mother dear ! O fragrant breath !  
In vain I swathed thy infant limbs, in vain  
I gave thee nurture at this breast, and toiled  
Wasted with care. If ever, now embrace,  
Now clasp thy mother, throw thine arms around  
My neck, and join thy cheek, thy lips to mine.  
Why, O ye Grecians, studying barb'rous ills,  
Why will you kill my son ? He hath not wronged you.  
Daughter of Tyndarus, but not of Jove,  
From many fathers must I deem thee sprung,  
From Vengeance first, then Hate, from Slaughter, Death,  
And all the ills earth breeds : for ne'er from Jove  
Durst I pronounce thy birth. Thou fatal pest

To many Phrygians, and to many Greeks.  
 Perdition seize thee ! By thy beauteous eyes  
 Thou vilely hast destroyed the realms of Troy.  
 Here, take him, bear him, hurl him from the height,  
 If ye must hurl him, feast upon his flesh :  
 For from the gods hath ruin fall'n on us :  
 We have no power to save my child from death.  
 Cover this wretched body, wrap it close,  
 Cast it into your galley ; for I come  
 To glorious nuptials, having lost my son.

CHOR. Unhappy Troy, what numbers hast thou lost,  
 Through one vile woman, and her hateful bed !

ANDR. Forbear, my son, forbear thy fond embrace  
 Of thy afflicted mother. Go, ascend  
 The summit of those towers, thy father's once,  
 There leave thy life, for so hath Greece decreed  
 Take him : fit herald of this deed is he,  
 Who knows no touch of pity or of shame,  
 But rather to your mandate gives assent.

HEC. O child, O son of my unhappy son,  
 We of thy life, beyond our thoughts, are reft,  
 I, and thy mother ! What can I, poor boy,  
 What can I do for thee, but smite this head,  
 And beat this breast ? That we can give thee, that  
 Is in our power. Ah me, what griefs for Troy  
 I suffer, what for thee ! Is there an ill  
 We have not ? What is wanting to the woes,  
 Which all the dreadful band of Ruin brings ?

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

Thou lord of Salamis, where love  
 The honey-gath'ring bees to rove,  
 Thou, who didst hold thy island-seat  
 Around whose rocks the billows beat,  
 Whose hallowed mounds first boast to show  
 Ranged down their sloping sides the olive bough,

Of blue-eyed Pallas heavenly crown,  
 And glory of her polished town :  
 Thou with Alcmena's son, whose hand  
 Grasped the strong bow, heldst high command.  
 Thy soul, like his, to glorious action bold,  
 To Troy, O Telamon, to Troy,  
 Our rampired city to destroy,  
 Thou camst, from Greece thou camst in times of old.

*Antistrophe 1.*

When, raging for the steeds denied,  
 Of Greece he led the blooming pride ;  
 Where Simois pours his beauteous flood  
 The hero's barks at anchor stood ;  
 Dauntless he leaped upon the strand,  
 His bow and arrows grasping in his hand :  
 Laomedon with wild affright  
 Marked how they winged their slaughter'ring flight.  
 Though Phœbus squared each polished stone,  
 The high-raised rampires are o'erthrown ;  
 Around the ruddy flames devouring rise,  
 And Troy a heap of ruin lies :  
 Twice raged the spear around her walls,  
 And twice with thund'ring sound the city falls.

*Strophe 2.*

In vain then at the golden bowls of Jove  
 Hast thou thy honoured place,  
 Thy steps composed with sweetest grace,  
 Presenting at the feast divine  
 To heaven's high king the sparkling wine ;  
 Vain, Dardan boy, thy glorious charge above ;  
 For war and wasting flames destroy,  
 Sunk to the ground, thy native Troy.  
 The sea-washed shores around  
 Loud cries and shrieks resound,  
 As for her young when the poor bird complains,  
 And anguish swells her strains :

Their husbands some, and some their sons deplore,  
 Their mothers some, with age that bow,  
     Lament with pious woe.  
 Thy brimmed baths are now no more,  
 A silent waste the circus lies,  
 Once thy loved scene of manly exercise,  
 But thou the throne of Jove beside,  
 Blooming in all youth's roseate pride,  
 Sweetly serene dost woo each grace  
 To give new beauties to thy face :  
 Yet Priam's realms lie waste, a desert drear,  
     Beneath the Grecian spear.

*Antistrophe 2.*

O Love, O Love, that to the seats of Troy,  
     Thy gently glowing fire  
     Kindling in heavenly breasts desire,  
     Didst once direct thy pleasing flight,  
     To what a splendid, stately height,  
 Whilst gods her dear alliance sought with joy,  
     Didst thou exalt her glorious fame ?  
     Now must thou bear another name ;  
     No more joy-kindling Love,  
     But the reproach of Jove.  
 This fatal morn, with silver-waving wings  
     Which light to mortals brings,  
 Hath seen destruction wide its ravage spread,  
     Hath seen the towers of Troy laid low  
     Beneath th' insulting foe :  
     With offspring yet to bless her bed  
     Her husband from this land she bore ;  
 The favoured youth yon orient regions o'er  
     Her four ethereal coursers bear,  
     Placed by her in the golden car.  
     Hence to thy country Hope might rise,  
     Graced with the favour of the skies :  
 But all the love, which touched the gods with joy,  
     Shrinks from the aid of Troy.

## MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

MEN. O thou bright-beaming radiance of this sun,  
 He'en in thee, my wife, these hands shall seize,  
 After the many toils I have sustained,  
 I, and the Grecian host. I came to Troy,  
 Not for a woman, as some lightly think,  
 But armed with vengeance 'gainst the man who broke  
 Each hospitable law, and from my house  
 Bore, as his spoil, my wife. But the just gods  
 He hath his meed, he and his country fall'n  
 Beneath the arms of Greece. The Spartan dame,  
 For not with pleasure can my tongue pronounce  
 Her name who was my wife, once was, I come  
 To lead from hence : for in this tent, among  
 The other captive dames of Troy enrolled,  
 Is she detained. For they, whose toiling spear  
 Achieved her, have presented her to me  
 To kill her, or, if such my will, to Greece  
 Alive to lead her : but my purpose is  
 The death of Helen to forbear at Troy,  
 And bear her in my stout bark o'er the seas  
 To Greece ; and there, in vengeance for my friends  
 Who beneath Ilium died, to give her death.  
 But, ye attendants, go into the tent,  
 Bring her forth, drag her by the hair with blood  
 Deeply polluted : when the fav'ring winds  
 Breathe in our sails, to Greece shall she be sent.

HEC. O Jove, who rulest the rolling of the earth,  
 And o'er it hast thy throne, whoever thou art,  
 The ruling mind, or the necessity  
 Of nature, I adore thee. Dark thy ways  
 And silent are thy steps ; to mortal man  
 Yet thou with justice all things dost ordain.

MEN. Why to the gods dost thou renew thy vows ?

HEC. I praise thy resolution, Menelaus,  
 If thou shalt kill thy wife. But fly her sight :  
 She captivates the eyes of men, takes towns ;



Sets houses all on fire ; such blandishments  
 She hath t' allure the soul ; I know her well,  
 Thou knowst her, and all they that suffer by her.

HELENA, MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

HEL. This is a prelude which may well cause fear :  
 For by thy servants, Menelaus, by force  
 I from the tent am dragged. But little wants  
 T' assure me that I am detested by thee.  
 Yet I would ask thee, by the states of Greece  
 And thee touching my life what is decreed.

MEN. Justice hath not pronounced fixed sentence on thee ;  
 But all the host of Greece, whom thou hast wronged,  
 Give thee to me, and thou by me shalt die.

HEL. May I have leave against this to urge my plea,  
 That, if I die, not justly I shall die ?

MEN. Not to hold converse came I, but to kill thee.

HEC. Yet hear her, Menelaus, nor let her die,  
 Her bland excuse not urged : but to her plea  
 Let me reply, for of the ills in Troy  
 Thou nothing knowst ; but when I sum them all,  
 From death no refuge shall be left to her.

MEN. This requires leisure ; yet if she would speak,  
 She is allowed : but let her know thy words  
 Gain her this leave ; no grace to her I grant.

HEL. Let me or well or ill appear to speak,  
 Thou no reply wilt haply deign me, deemed [to MENELAUS]  
 An enemy : yet to the crime, of which [to HECUBA]  
 I know thou wilt accuse me, I will make [to HECUBA]  
 Reply, and to thy charge my pleas oppose.  
 'Gainst thee my charge. She first, then, to these ills  
 Gave birth, when she gave Paris birth ; and next  
 The aged Priam ruined Troy and thee,  
 The infant not destroying, at his birth  
 Denounced a baleful firebrand. Hear from thence  
 What followed. 'Twixt the rival goddesses  
 Paris was judge. From Pallas was his meed  
 To lead the Phrygian arms, and conquer Greece ;

From Juno, if to her his voice adjudged  
The prize, to hold o'er Asia and the bounds  
Of Europe his wide empire : but, my form  
Extolling, Venus promised to his arms  
To give me, if in beauty she surpassed  
The other goddesses. Mark now th' event.  
The prize is given to Venus; and so far  
My nuptials profit Greece : you are not fall'n  
Beneath Barbarians or a tyrant's sway,  
Nor to protect your country stand in arms.  
I, in what Greece is happy, am undone,  
Sold for my beauty, and with cruel taunts  
Reviled for what my head deserves a crown.  
But thou wilt say that to an obvious charge  
I have not yet replied, that from thy house  
I fled by stealth. Her son, for ruin born,  
Or Paris called or Alexander, came,  
And brought no feeble goddess in his train :  
Him, thou most worthless, leaving in thy house,  
From Sparta didst thou hoist thy sails for Crete.  
Well, what ensued of thee I will not ask,  
But of myself : what could induce my thought,  
My country for a stranger, and my house  
Betrayed, to follow him ? Thy vengeance rouse  
Against the goddess, and be thou than Jove  
More potent ; he o'er other gods bears rule,  
But is her slave : I then may pardon find.  
But hence against me thou mayst urge a charge  
Of specious argument : When Paris died,  
And low in earth was laid, behoved me then.  
Since by no god my nuptials then were wrought,  
To leave his house, and to the Grecian ships  
To come. On this I earnestly was bent ;  
Witness, ye guards who kept the gates, and you  
Who stationed on the walls held careful watch,  
How oft you found me from the battlements  
With ropes attempting to slide down by stealth :  
But this new husband seizing me by force,  
Deiphobus, the Trojans much averse,

Held me his wife. How then can justice doom me  
To die? With justice how can I be slain  
By thee, my husband, since he wedded me  
By force? Thus from my house was I a slave  
Sold for the prize of conquest. If thou aim  
T' exceed the gods in power, the thought is folly.

CHOR. Defend thy children and thy country, queen;  
Refute her glozing speech. Her words are fair,  
Her actions foul. In this much danger lies.

HEC. The goddesses my voice shall first defend,  
And show that she unjustly charges blame  
On them. For Juno never will I deem,  
Or virgin Pallas, to such frenzy sunk,  
That Argos to Barbarians she would sell,  
Or Pallas to the Phrygians e'er enslave  
Her favoured Athens, who in sportive mood  
And dainty dalliance to Ida came,  
For form contesting. Whence this strong desire  
In royal Juno of superior charms?  
Was it to win a greater lord than Jovè?  
Did Pailas, of her father who had asked  
To keep her virgin purity unsoiled,  
Flying connubial rites, aim now t' obtain  
The nuptials of some god? Forbear to charge  
These goddesses with folly, to set off  
Thy own misdeeds; no credence with the wise  
Wilt thou acquire. But Venus, thou hast said  
(High subject this for laughter), with my son  
Came to the house of Menelaus. At rest  
In heaven remaining, could she not have brought her,  
And e'en Amyclæ, had she pleased, to Troy?  
My son was with surpassing beauty graced;  
And thy fond passion, when he struck thy sight,  
Became a Venus: for each foolish fondness  
To mortals is a Venus, and the soul  
Bereaves of reason. When thine eyes beheld him  
Glutting in rich barbaric vests and gold,  
Thy passions were to madness soon inflamed,  
At Argos little hadst thou been with wealth

Acquainted. Quitting Sparta, thou hadst hope  
The Phrygian state, flowing with gold, would yield  
Thy proud expense supplies ; nor could the house  
Of Menelaus within its narrow walls  
Give thy insulting vanities free scope.  
Well, let that pass. My son, thou sayst, by force  
Bore thee away. What Spartan of that force  
Was sensible ? With what cries didst thou call  
Castor, thy brother, to thy aid, then strong  
In manhood's prime, then living, to the stars  
Not then exalted ? When thou camest to Troy,  
And, following close, the Grecians, raged the spear  
In conflict fierce ; whene'er his arms obtained  
Aught of advantage, Menelaus thy praise  
Extolled, to grieve my son in that his love  
Met with a potent rival : if success  
Favoured the Trojans, he was nothing then.  
Thine eyes were fixed on Fortune ; this thy care,  
To follow her ; to Virtue thou wouldst pay  
No homage. Yet with ropes didst thou attempt,  
Such is thy plea, down from the walls to slide  
By stealth, as if detained against thy will :  
By whom wast thou surprised in act to fix  
The pendent rope or point the sharpened sword ?  
This would a woman of a gen'rous soul,  
Who sorrowed for her husband lost, have done.  
Yet much did I admonish thee, and oft,  
" Leave, O my daughter, leave us : other wives  
My sons shall wed : I to the Grecian ships  
Will send thee secretly, that war no more  
'Twixt Greece and us may rage." To this thy heart  
Was much averse ; still in thy husband's house  
Thy insolence of grandeur wouldst thou hold,  
Imperious still from thy barbaric train  
Claim prostrate adoration : there thy pride  
Found rich supplies ; from thence didst thou come forth  
Gorgeously vested, and the same bright sky  
View with thy husband, O detested wretch,  
When it became thee with thy garments rent,

Humble, and cowering, and thy tresses shorn,  
 To have appeared, and for thy former faults  
 To veil thy shameless pride with modesty.  
 But, Menelaus, that thou mayst know what end  
 My words would have, give Greece a glorious crown  
 By killing her, and this thy law confirm  
 To other women, "She who dares betray  
 Her husband, faithless to his bed, shall die."

CHOR. Oh, for the honour of thy ancestors,  
 And of thy house, punish thy wife. From Greece  
 Take this vile woman, this reproach, away ;  
 And show thy gen'rous spirit to thy foes.

MEN. In this thy sentiment accords with mine,  
 That willingly she left my house, and sought  
 A foreign bed ; and, to set off her plea,  
 Is Venus introduced. Go, where with stones  
 Thou shalt be crushed : and in one hour repay  
 The Grecians for their tedious toils, by death,  
 That thou mayst learn ne'er to disgrace me more.

HEL. Low at thy knees a suppliant I beg thee,  
 To me impute not what the gods have done  
 Amiss. Ah, do not kill me ; pardon me !

HEC. Thy brave associates in this wasteful war,  
 Whom she hath slain, I beg thee for their sake,  
 And for my children's, do not thou betray.

MEN. Forbear, age-honoured lady ; for of her  
 I have no heed. You, who attend me, hence  
 To the bark bear her : she shall sail for Greece.

HEC. Let her not enter the same bark with thee.

MEN. Why ? Is the freight more heavy than before ?

HEC. He is no lover, who not always loves.

MLN. That every thought of love may be discharged,  
 Thy will shall be complied with : the same bark  
 With me she shall not enter : not amiss  
 Is thy monition. When she comes to Greece,  
 For her vile deeds as vilely shall she die,  
 And teach all other women to be chaste,  
 No easy lesson : yet her death with fear  
 Shall strike their folly, be they worse than she.

## HECUBA, CHORUS.

## CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

\* So, to the Grecian arms a prey,  
 The temple Ilium's height that crowned,  
 The altar breathing odours round,  
     O Jove, dost thou betray ;  
 The flames of holy sacrifice,  
 The clouds of incense wreathing to the skies.  
 The towers of Pergamus that rose  
 A sacred rampire 'gainst the foes,  
 The darksome, ivy-vested woods,  
 The woods that wave on Ida's brow,  
 Down whose steep sides the cool translucent floods  
     In mazy channels flow,  
 The height, which first the sun's bright ray  
 Impurples with the orient beams of day.

*Antistrophe 1.*

Ah, banished is each solemn rite ;  
 The sacred choirs with tuneful song,  
 Echoing thy hollow rocks among,  
     No more shall charm the night :  
 No more thy summits shall behold  
 The forms of gods that breathe in sculptured gold :  
 On thee the full-orbed moon no more  
 Shall Phrygia's hallowed sports restore.  
 O king, in yon ethereal skies  
 High-throned who holdst thy sov'reign state,  
 Will in thy soul no gentle pity rise,  
     For Troy's unhappy fate,  
 Sunk to the dust her towered head  
 As wide the raging flames their ravage spread ?

*Strophe 2.*

Dear to my soul, my wedded lord,  
Fail'n, fall'n beneath the slaught'ring sword,  
Nor cleansing bath, nor decent tomb  
Was thine, but in the Stygian gloom  
Wanders thy melancholy ghost.  
But me the bark that ploughs the main,  
Winged with her swelling sails, shall bear  
To Argos famed for steeds that whirl the car :  
Where by the lab'ring Cyclops rise  
The rampired walls that brave the skies.  
My children, now a friendless train,  
Wailing with sighs and tears their fate,  
Call on their mother in the gate :  
Their mother from their eyes the Grecian host  
In the black vessel bear away,  
And dash with oars the foaming sea ;  
To sacred Salamis they sweep,  
Or where the Isthmus o'er the deep  
Stretches its head, and views with pride  
An ocean rolling 'gainst each side ;  
Where Pelops in the rocky strait  
Fixed in old times his royal seat.

*Antistrophe 2.*

On the detested bark, the waves  
In the wide ocean when she braves  
May the loud thunder's deep'ning roar  
Fierce its tempestuous fury pour ;  
And, kindled by Idæan Jove,  
The forked lightning's bick'ring flame,  
In haughty triumph as she rides,  
Fail on her deck, and pierce her rifted sides :  
For me from Ilium, bathed in tears,  
From my loved country far she bears  
A slave to some proud Grecian dame.

Reflecting Helen's winning grace  
 The golden mirror there hath place,  
 At which the virgins joy their charms t' improve.  
 Ne'er may she reach the Spartan shore,  
 Her household gods ne'er visit more,  
 Through Pitane ne'er proudly pass,  
 Nor through Minerva's gates of brass ;  
 For Greece, through all its wide domains,  
 With shame her fatal marriage stains ;  
 And gives through scenes of bitterest woe  
 The streams of Simois to flow.

Alas ! In quick succession o'er this land  
 Ills roll on ill. Behold, ye Trojan dames  
 Oppressed with woes, the dead Astyanax,  
 Thrown by the ruthless Grecians from the towers.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TALT. One vessel, royal Hecuba, yet waits  
 To plough the deep, the treasures that remain,  
 Selected for Achilles' son, to bear  
 To Phthia's shore : the youthful chief is gone,  
 Informed of some calamities, which late  
 Have fall'n on Peleus, that Acastus, son  
 Of Pelias, hath driven him from his realms :  
 On this with quicker speed, than if the time  
 Allowed delay, he sailed, and with him bore  
 Andromache, who from mine eyes wrung tears  
 At her departure, for her country such  
 Her mournful sighs, and such at Hector's tomb  
 Her invocations : earnest her request  
 To thee, that her dead child, who from the tower  
 Fell and expired, thou in the earth wouldst lay,  
 Thy Hector's son ; and this brass-plated shield,  
 The terror of the Grecians, which his father  
 Before his breast once raised ; that to the house  
 Of Peleus, nay to the same chamber, where  
 Andromache, the mother of this child,



Must mount the nuptial bed, she may not bear it,  
 To sorrow at its sight : but for the chest  
 Of cedar, for the marble tomb, in this  
 That thou wouldst bury him ; conjuring me  
 To give him to thy arms, that with what robes  
 And crowns thy present fortune yields thee means,  
 Thou her dead son wouldst grace, since she is gone,  
 And her lord's haste allowed her not to give  
 Her dear child to the tomb. When thou hast dressed  
 The body with what ornaments thou mayst,  
 The earth will we heap on him ; then we sail.  
 With thy best speed what is enjoined thee do :  
 From one toil I have freed thee ; passing o'er  
 Scamander's stream the body I have bathed,  
 And washed its wounds : but now I go to sink  
 Deep in the earth his place of sepulture,  
 That with more speed, with what thou hast in charge  
 My toil concurring, we may sail for Greece.

## HECUBA, CHORUS.

HEC. Place the orb'd shield of Hector on the ground,  
 A mournful sight, nor pleasing to mine eyes.  
 Why, O ye Grecians, who in arms excel  
 More than in gen'rous minds, why have you wrought,  
 Fearing this child, a slaughter to this hour  
 Unheard of ? Was it lest the time might come  
 When he might raise fall'n Troy ? There was no cause :  
 E'en when my Hector shone in prosperous arms,  
 And thousands with him shook the purple spear,  
 We perished : since the vanquished city sunk  
 Your prey, and in the war the Perygian force  
 Was wasted, such an infant could you fear ?  
 The fear, which reason disavows, I blame.  
 O thou most dear, how hapless was thy death ?  
 Hadst thou in manhood's prime, the nuptial bed  
 Possessed, and high, imperial, godlike power,  
 Died for thy country, happy hadst thou been,  
 If aught of these be happy ; nor, my child,

These to thine eyes presented and thy thought,  
Thou didst not taste, nor aught of what thy house  
Contained enjoy. Ah me, how wretchedly  
Thy father's walls, the towers by Phœbus raised,  
Have rent the crispéd ringlets from thy head,  
Which thy fond mother cherished, nor withheld  
The frequent kiss ! But now, the bones all crushed,  
The slaughter riots, to abstain from words  
Of harsher utterance. Ah, these hands, whose joints  
Once the dear image of thy father's bore,  
Now lie with loosened nerves ! O thou dear mouth,  
Which utteredst many a spritely pleasantry,  
How art thou mangled ? Where thy promise now  
Which once thou madst me, hanging on my robes ?  
“ O mother, didst thou say, these clust'ring locks  
Will I for thee cut off, and to thy tomb  
With my companions bear them, hailing thee  
With dear address.” Such honours now to me  
Thou dost not pay ; but thee, unhappy child,  
Dead in thy early bloom, must I inter,  
Old, of my country, of my children reft.  
Ah me, are all my fond embraces, all  
My nursing pains to lull thy infancy  
To sleep, thus lost ? And on thy tomb what verse,  
Thy death declaring, shall the bard inscribe ?  
“ This child the Grecians, for they feared him slew ; ”  
A verse recording the disgrace of Greece.  
But of thy father's wealth though reft, his shield  
Shall yet be thine, and on its plated brass  
Thou shalt be laid in th' earth. O thou, the fence  
Of Hector's nervous arm, thou hast, O shield,  
Lost thy best guardian ! Yet how sweet to trace  
The mark of his strong grasp, and on the verge  
Of thy high orb the sweat, which from his brows  
Amidst his toils oft dropt, when to his face  
Close he applied thee ! For th' unhappy dead  
Bring what of ornament is left us now ;  
For not to splendour hath the god assigned  
Our fortunes ; but of what I have to grace thee

Thou shalt receive. Of mortals him I deem  
Unwise, who, thinking that his state is blest,  
Joys as secure : for Fortune, like a man  
Distempered in his senses, this way now,  
Now that way leaps, inconstant in her course.  
No mortal knows stability of bliss.

CHOR. See, from the spoils of Troy their ready hands  
Have brought thee ornaments t' inwrap the dead.

HEC. Thee, O my child, not victor with the bow  
O'er thy compeers, nor on the spritely steed,  
Customs held high by Phrygia's manly sons.  
Unwearied in the chase, thy father's mother  
Decks with these ornaments from treasures once  
Thine own ; but Helen, by the gods abhorred,  
Hath rent them from thee, hath destroyed thy life,  
And all thy hapless house in ruins laid.

CHOR. O thou hast touched, O thou hast touched my heart,  
Thou, who wast once my city's mighty king !

HEC. Around thy limbs I wrap these gorgeous vests  
Of Phrygian texture, which thou shouldst have worn  
To grace thy nuptials with some noble bride  
Surpassing all the Asiatic dames.

And thou, with conquests glorious, mother once  
Of num'rous trophies, be thou crowned, loved shield  
Of Hector : for, not dying, with the dead  
Shalt thou be laid : with honours to be graced,  
Thee worthier than the arms of my new lord,  
The wise and base Ulysses, I esteem.

CHOR. Ah bitter lamentation ! Thee, O child,  
Thee shall the Earth receive : thou, mother, raise  
The cry that wails the dead.

HEC. My heart is rent.

CHOR. My heart too for thy dreadful ills is rent.

HEC. Thy wounds with hands medicinal—ah me,  
Vain service !—will I bind. Among the dead  
All that remains shall be thy father's care.

CHOR. Strike, strike thy head ; loud let thy hands resound.  
Ah me !

HEC. Ye females dearest to my soul !

CHOR. Give utterance, royal lady, to thy griefs.

HEC. The gods intended nothing, but my woes,  
And hate to Troy, most ruthless hate. In vain  
The victims at their altars then we slew.  
Yet from the heights above had not their power  
Encompassed us, and low beneath the earth  
Sunk us in ruin, by the Muse's voice  
We had not been recorded, nor the bards  
To latest ages given the lofty verse.  
Go, in the tomb lay the unhappy dead ;  
For, as becomes the shades below, with crowns  
He is adorned : but little it imports  
The dead, I think, if any shall obtain  
Magnificent and costly obsequies :  
Vain affectation of the living this.

CHOR. Ah the unhappy mother, in thy life  
Who wove her brightest hopes ! Though highly blest,  
As from illustrious parents thy rich stream  
Of blood deriving, dreadful was thy death.

HEC. Alas, alas ! Whom see I on the heights  
Of Ilium, blazing torches in their hands  
Waving ? Some fresh misfortune threatens Troy.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TALT. Ye leaders of the bands, who have in charge  
To burn the town of Priam, from my voice  
Hear your instructions : idle in your hands  
No longer hold the flames, but hurl them, spread  
The wasting blaze, that, Ilium low in dust  
O'erturned, we may with joy return to Greece.  
And you (for now to you my speech is turned),  
Ye Trojan dames, soon as the chiefs shall give  
The trumpet's sounding voice, go to the ships  
Of Greece, that from this country you may sail.  
And thou, unhappy lady worn with age,  
Follow : for from Ulysses these are come,  
To whom thy fortune sends thee hence a slave.

HEC. O miserable me ! This is the last,

This is the extreme bound of all my ills.  
 I from my country go ; my city sinks  
 In flames. But haste, my aged foot, though weak,  
 That I may yet salute the wretched town :  
 O Troy, that once 'mongst the barbaric states  
 Stoodst high aspiring, thy illustrious name  
 Soon shalt thou lose, for thee the raging flames  
 Consume : and from our country us they lead,  
 Now lead us slaves. Ye gods ! But why invoke  
 The gods ? Invoked before they did not hear.  
 But bear me, let me rush into the flames :  
 For this would be the greatest glory to me,  
 With thee my burning country now to die.

TALT. Unhappy, thou art frenetic with thine ills.  
 Lead her, nay force her hence ; for to his hand,  
 Charged by Ulysses, I must give his prize.

HEC. Woe, woe, woe, woe, intolerable woe !  
 O Jove, O sov'reign lord of Phrygia's realms,  
 Almighty sire, seest thou our miseries,  
 Unworthy of the race of Dardanus ?

CHOR. He sees, yet this magnific city, now  
 No city, is destroyed. Troy is no more.

HEC. O sight of horror ! Ilium blazes ; high  
 O'er Pergamus the fiery deluge rolls,  
 Rolls o'er the city, and its tow'ring red walls.

CHOR. The glories of my country, e'en as smoke  
 Which on light wings is borne aloft in air,  
 By war are wasted ; all her blazing domes  
 Are sunk beneath the flames and hostile spear.

HEC. O my dear country, fost'ring land, who gavst  
 My children nurture !

CHOR. O unhappy land !

HEC. Hear, O my children, know your mother's voice !

CHOR. With mournful voice dost thou address the dead ;  
 And throwing on the ground thy aged limbs  
 Dig with thy hands the earth. Behold, I bend  
 My knee with thine, and grovelling on the ground  
 Call our unhappy husbands laid beneath.

HEC. Ah, we are borne, are dragged,

CHOR.

O mournful voice !

HEC. Dragged to the house of slavery.

CHOR.

From my country.

HEC. O Priam, Priam, thou indeed art fall'n,  
Thou hast no tomb, no friend ; but of my woes  
Thou knowst not ; for black death hath closed thine eyes ;  
By impious slaughter is the pious fall'n !

CHOR. Ye temples of the gods, and thou, loved town,  
Destruction from the flames and pointed spear  
Is on you ; low on earth you soon will lie,  
Your glories vanished ; for the dust, like smoke  
On light wings mounting high, will leave my house  
An undistinguished ruin ; e'en thy name,  
My country, shall be lost. In different forms  
Destruction comes on all. Troy is no more.

HEC. Heard you that dreadful crash ? It was the fall  
Of Pergamus. The city rocks—it rocks,  
And crushed beneath the rolling ruin sinks.  
My limbs, my trembling limbs, hence, bear me hence.

TALT. Go to the wretched day of servile life.  
Alas, unhappy city ! But from hence  
Go, to the Grecian ships advance thy steps.

II

THE BACCHANALS

*AND OTHER PLAYS*





## II

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE beautiful translation of "The Bacchanals" which opens this volume was made by the late Henry Hart Milman, who was Dean of St. Paul's when he died in 1868. It had its origin in English verse translations made to illustrate a course of Latin Lectures on the History of Greek Poetry, delivered when Milman had made his own reputation as a dramatic poet with "Fazio" in 1815, "The Fall of Jerusalem" in 1820, and "The Martyr of Antioch" in 1821. In that year 1821, Milman—who was then Vicar of St. Mary's, Reading—was elected to the Oxford Professorship of Poetry. He had been known in Oxford as a poet from his student years. In 1812 he had carried off the Newdigate Prize for an English Poem on the Apollo Belvedere, and he had three times obtained the Chancellor's Prize. As Poetry Professor he translated specimens of the Greek Dramatists upon whose art he lectured. These translations he published in 1865, with a development of two of the plays—"The Agamemnon" of Æschylus and "The Bacchanals" of Euripides—into complete versions. The volume in which these plays were published,\* with the translated Passages of Greek Poetry which had been set in the lectures given many years before, is a beautiful book, illustrated with woodcuts drawn from antique gems—the sort of book that ranks with the best ornaments of a well-furnished home. I thank most heartily the poet's son, Mr. Arthur Milman, and Mr. John Murray the publisher, for leave to borrow from the volume this translation of "The Bacchanals," for the purpose of giving to English readers a fuller sense of the genius of Euripides than they might get from the faithful last century translators upon whom we have chiefly to depend.

The other plays in this volume are given in the translations of Michael Wodhull, who published in 1809 his version of "The Nineteen Tragedies and Fragments of Euripides." Wodhull had published

\* "The Agamemnon of Æschylus and the Bacchanals of Euripides with Passages from the Lyric and Later Poets of Greece." Translated by Henry Hart Milman, D.D., Dean of St. Paul's. John Murray. 1865.

a limited edition of 150 copies of his own Poems in 1772, and published also in 1798 a poem on "The Equality of Mankind;" but he did not win, as Milman has won, enduring recognition as an English poet. He spent, however, many years of patient work, with great enjoyment, upon the endeavour to produce an accurate translation of the whole works of Euripides that now remain. His first design was to translate selected plays, but where choice was difficult and zeal was active there was nothing that could be left out. Wodhull's verse has too many prosaic turns, but it is well that the English reader should see Euripides through the eyes of more than one translator.

Dean Milman translated "The Bacchanals" because he regarded it as, on the whole, entitled to the highest place among the plays of Euripides, though there may be passages of more surpassing beauty in "The Medea" and "The Hippolytus;" in "The Alcestis" and "Iphigenia" of greater tenderness. He observed that even Lord Macaulay, with his contemptuous depreciation of Euripides, acknowledged the transcendent excellence of "The Bacchæ," the only surviving Greek tragedy connected with the worship and mystic history of Dionysus—Bacchus.

In the "Christus Patiens," ascribed to Gregory of Nazianzen, who was made Bishop of Constantinople in the year 380 and died in 389, some lines given by Euripides to Agave in "The Bacchanals" were transferred to the Virgin Mary's lament over her son, and this use of the passage led to its omission from all texts of Euripides that have come down to us. "I have been audacious enough," said Dean Milman, "to endeavour to make restitution to the Heathen; and from the hints furnished by the 'Christus Patiens,' and of course other images more suited to her tragic state as the murderess of her son, to supply the speech of Agave, distinguishing it by a different type."

Michael Wodhull includes in his volumes as a guide among the incidents of many of the Greek Plays a "History of the House of Tantalus." In short, it runs thus, to the siege of Troy.

Tmolus, a Lydian king, married Pluta, and, Jupiter intervening, Pluta was mother of Tantalus. Tantalus lived at Sipylus, with riches that became proverbial. The gods came to dine with him, but, through vanity, he told again their counsels that he heard, for which he was placed after death to thirst in the midst of a lake from which it was impossible to drink, or according to Euripides in "Orestes") had an enormous stone hanging over his head. That he dished up for the gods the limbs of his son Pelops, Iphigenia in Tauris calls a fable of savages who excuse their own cruelty by finding its like in higher places. Tantalus by his wife Euryanassa had two sons, Pelops and Broteas, and one daughter, Niobe. Niobe married Amphion, who raised the walls of Thebes by music of his lyre. Having seen all her children slain by the shafts of Apollo and Diana, Niobe, all tears, was changed into a rock.

The tomb of her seven daughters is spoken of in the play of "The Phœnician Damsels" as not far from the gates of Thebes. Sipylus, in which Tantalus ruled, was swallowed by an earthquake, and Tantalus, having by a false oath denied a pledge, was killed by Jupiter, who hunted him down the mountain at the foot of which Sipylus stood.

Pelops succeeded his father Tantalus. Defeated in contests with Ilius, founder of the Trojan nation, he sought alliance with Greece by marrying Hippodamia, daughter of Cœnomaus, king of Pisa. She was to be given to the man who overcame her father in a chariot race, but he who did not overcome was to be slain. Cœnomaus was first always, because his chariot was driven by Myrtilus, the son of Mercury. But Pelops made a base compact with Myrtilus, who joined the wheels of Cœnomaus to his chariot with wax, and caused his overthrow when in the race with Pelops. A dispute followed, in which Pelops killed Cœnomaus with a spear. He killed also Myrtilus, the son of Mercury, rather than fulfil the compact he had made. This drew down the vengeance of Mercury upon Atreus and Thyestes, the two eldest of the seven sons of Pelops. Pelops himself thrived, made prosperous alliances, and gathered into one the territories of Apia and Pelasgia, so that the whole peninsula of Greece was called after him the Peloponnessus. One of his sons, Pitheus, whom Euripides celebrates for piety, was the father of Æthra who was the mother of Theseus, who was the father of Hippolitus. Pelops had for one daughter Anaxibia, who married Strophius, king of Phocis, and was the mother of Pylades, friend to his kinsman Orestes; for another daughter, Lysidice, who married Electryon, king of Mycene, and was the mother of Alcmena, who married Amphitryon, and became the mother of Hercules. Pelops had also another daughter, Nicippe, who married Sthenelus. He seized the throne of Mycene when Amphitryon had accidentally killed Electryon his father-in-law. Nicippe and Sthenelus had a son Eurystheus, who succeeded his father in Mycene, and whose ill-treatment of Hercules and of the children of Hercules is treated of by Euripides in his play of "The Children of Hercules."

Pelops had also a natural son, Chrysippus, who was treacherously stolen from him by Laius his guest. For this breach of hospitality Laius, as the oracle foretold, died by the hands of his own son Cœdipus.

After the death of Pelops his eldest sons Atreus and Thyestes ruled together in Argos; until Mercury caused a ram with a golden fleece to appear among the flocks of Atreus, who took it as a sign that he alone should rule. The citizens of Argos were invited to decide. Before they met, Thyestes, by collusion with Ærope the wife of Atreus, conveyed the Golden Ram into his own stalls and obtained the vote of the people. Atreus in revenge caused the two children of his

false wife and Thyestes to be served up to Thyestes at a feast. At this horror portents appeared in the skies. Atreus drowned Ærope, drove Thyestes out of Argos, and not only ruled in Argos but added Mycene when Eurystheus had been slain by the sons of Hercules. But Ægisthus, a son of Thyestes by his own daughter Pelopia, murdered his uncle Atreus and made his father again king in Argos. Atreus had by his wife Ærope, before she gave herself to Thyestes, two sons, Agamemnon and Menelaus. They were sent for protection against their uncle Thyestes to the court of Polyidas, king of Sicyon, who sent them on to Ceneus, king of Cætolia.

Agamemnon, while thus in difficulties, killed a Tantalus junior, grandson to the founder of the family. He killed this Tantalus that he might take possession of his wife Clytemnestra, daughter to Tyndarus, king of Sparta. Euripides in the "*Iphigenia in Aulis*" makes Clytemnestra reproach Agamemnon with having also killed the infant child of her first marriage by tearing it out of her arms and dashing it upon the floor. Castor and Pollux, sons of Leda by Jupiter Swan, made war then upon Agamemnon and reduced him to submission. Tyndarus king of Sparta then gave Clytemnestra to Agamemnon for a wife, and also helped him and his brother Menelaus to subdue Thyestes, who took refuge at an altar of Juno, and gave himself up to his nephews on promise that they would spare his life. They deposed him and confined him for the rest of his days in the island of Cithæra.

Clytemnestra's sister, the other daughter of Tyndarus, king of Sparta, was Helen, who had the chief princes of Greece for suitors. Tyndarus made them swear to support whatever man she might herself choose for husband, and her choice fell upon Menelaus. But soon after the marriage Paris, one of the sons of Priam, king of Troy, came with a splendid following to Sparta, and while her husband was away on business at Crete, Paris persuaded Helen to elope with him. Menelaus sent to demand her back from Troy. The Trojans kept her, and war followed with the siege of Troy, during which, according to Euripides in his play of "*Helen*," the real Helen had been conveyed by Mercury through the air and placed in the care of Proteus, king of Egypt, where she remained of stainless character, while Paris at Troy had only a cloud-image of her. Menelaus on his return from the ten years' war, driven upon the coast of Egypt, found his own Helen all that he could wish.

H. M

*January 1858.*

# EURIPIDES.

## THE BACCHANALS.

### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

DIONYSUS.	ATTENDANT.
CHORUS OF BACCHANALS.	MESSENGER.
TIRESIAS.	SECOND MESSENGER.
CADMUS.	AGAVE.
PENTHEUS.	

### DIONYSUS.

UNTO this land of Thebes I come, Jove's son,  
Dionysus ; he whom Semele of yore,  
'Mid the dread midwifery of lightning fire,  
Bore, Cadmus' daughter. In a mortal form,  
The God put off, by Dirce's stream I stand,  
And cool Ismenos' waters ; and survey  
My mother's grave, the thunder-slain, the ruins  
Still smouldering of that old ancestral palace,  
The flame still living of the lightning fire,  
Here's immortal vengeance 'gainst my mother.

And well hath reverent Cadmus set his ban  
On that heaven-stricken, unapproached place.  
His daughter's tomb, which I have mantied o'er  
With the pale verdure of the trailing vine.

And I have left the golden Lydian shores,  
The Phrygian and the Persian sun-seared plains,  
And Bactria's walls ; the Medes' wild wintery land

Have passed, and Araby the Blest ; and all  
Of Asia, that along the salt-sea coast  
Lifts up her high-towered cities, where the Greeks,  
With the Barbarians mingled, dwell in peace.

And everywhere my sacred choirs, mine Orgies  
Have founded, by mankind confessed a God.  
Now first in an Hellenic town I stand.

Of all the Hellenic land here first in Thebes,  
I have raised my revel shout, my fawn-skin donned.  
Ta'en in my hand my thyrsus, ivy-crowned.

But here, where least beseemed, my mother's sisters  
Vowed Dionysus was no son of Jove :  
That Semele, by mortal paramour won,  
Belied great Jove as author of her sin ;  
'Twas but old Cadmus' craft : hence Jove in wrath  
Struck dead the bold usurper of his bed.

So from their homes I've goaded them in frenzy ;  
Their wits all crazed, they wander o'er the mountains,  
And I have forced them wear my wild attire.  
There's not a woman of old Cadmus' race,  
But I have maddened from her quiet house ;  
Unseemly mingled with the sons of Thebes,  
On the roofless rocks, 'neath the pale pines, they sit.

Needs must this proud recusant city learn,  
In our dread Mysteries initiate,  
Her guilt, and humbly seek to make atonement  
To me, for Semele, mine outraged mother—  
To me, the God confessed, of Jove begot.

Old Cadmus now his might and kingly rule  
To Pentheus hath given up, his sister's son,  
My godhead's foe ; who from the rich libation  
Repels me, nor makes mention of my name  
In holy prayer. Wherefore to him, to Thebes,  
And all her sons, soon will I terribly show  
That I am born a God : and so depart  
(Here all things well disposed) to other lands,  
Making dread revelation of myself.

But if this Theban city, in her ire,  
With arms shall seek to drive from off the mountains



My Bacchanal rout, at my wild Mænads' head  
 I'll meet, and mingle in the awful war.  
 Hence have I ta'en the likeness of a man,  
 Myself transmuted into human form.

But ye, who Tmolus, Lydia's strength, have left  
 My Thyasus of women, whom I have led  
 From lands barbarian, mine associates here,  
 And fellow-pilgrims ; lift ye up your drums,  
 Familiar in your native Phrygian cities,  
 Made by your mother Rhea's craft and mine ;  
 And beat them all round Pentheus' royal palace,  
 Beat, till the city of Cadmus throngs to see.  
 I to the Bacchanals in the dim glens  
 Of wild Cithæron go to lead the dance.

CHOR. From the Asian shore,  
 And by the sacred steep of Tmolus hoar,  
 Light I danced with wing-like feet,  
 Toilless toil and labour sweet !  
 Away ! away ! whoe'er he be ;  
 Leave our path, our temple free !  
 Seal up each silent lip in holy awe.  
 But I, obedient to thy law,

O Dionysus ! chant the choral hymn to thee.

Blest above all of human line,  
 Who, deep in mystic rites divine,  
 Leads his hallowed life with us,  
 Initiate in our Thyasus ;  
 And, purified with holiest waters,  
 Goes dancing o'er the hills with Bacchus' daughters.  
 And thy dark orgies hallows he,  
 O mighty Mother, Cybele !  
 He his thyrsus shaking round,  
 All his locks with ivy crowned,

O Dionysus ! boasts of thy dread train to be.

Bacchanals ! away, away !  
 Lead your God in fleet array ;  
 Bacchus lead, the ever young,  
 A God himself from Gods that sprung,

From the Phrygian mountains down  
 Through every wide-squared Grecian town.  
 Him the Theban queen of yore  
 'Mid Jove's fast-flashing lightnings bore :  
 In her awful travail wild  
 Sprung from her womb the untimely child,  
 While smitten with the thunderblast  
 The sad mother breathed her last.  
  
 Instant him Saturnian Jove  
 Received with all a mother's love ;  
 In his secret thigh immured,  
 There with golden clasps secured,  
 Safe from Herè's jealous sight ;  
 Then, as the Fates fulfilled, to light  
 He gave the hornéd god, and wound  
 The living snakes his brows around ;  
 Whence still the wandéd Mænads bear  
 Their serpent prey wreathed in their floating hair.  
  
 Put on thy ivy crown,  
 O Thebes, thou sacred town !  
 O hallowed house of dark-haired Semele !  
 Bloom, blossom everywhere,  
 With flowers and fruitage fair,  
 And let your frenzied steps supported be  
 With thyrsi from the oak  
 Or the green ash-tree broke :  
 Your spotted fawn-skins line with locks  
 Torn from the snowy fleecéd flocks :  
 Shaking his wanton wand let each advance,  
 And all the land shall madden with the dance.  
  
 Bromius, that his revel rout  
 To the mountains leads about ;  
 To the mountains leads along,  
 Where awaits the female throng ;  
 From the distaff, from the loom.  
 Raging with the God they come.  
 O ye mountains, wild and high,  
 Where the old Kouretæ lie :

Glens of Crete, where Jove was nurst,  
 In your sunless caverns first  
 The crested Korybantes found  
 The leathern drums mysterious round,  
 That, mingling in harmonious strife  
 With the sweet-breathed Phrygian life,  
 In Mother Rhea's hands they place,  
 Meet the Bacchic song to grace.  
 And the frantic Satyrs round  
 That ancient Goddess leap and bound :  
 And soon the Trieteric dances light  
 Began, immortal Bacchus' chief delight.

On the mountains wild 'tis sweet  
 When faint with rapid dance our feet ;  
 Our limbs on earth all careless thrown  
 With the sacred fawn-skins strewn,  
 To quaff the goat's delicious blood,  
 A strange, a rich, a savage food.  
 Then off again the revel goes  
 O'er Phrygian, Lydian mountain brows ;  
 Evoë ! Evoë ! leads the road,  
 Bacchus self the maddening God !  
 And flows with milk the plain, and flows with wine,  
 Flows with the wild bees' nectar-dews divine ;  
 And soars, like smoke, the Syrian incense pale—  
 The while the frantic Bacchanal  
 The beaconing pine-torch on her wand  
 Whirls around with rapid hand,  
 And drives the wandering dance about,  
 Beating time with joyous shout,  
 And casts upon the breezy air  
 All her rich luxuriant hair ;  
 Ever the burthen of her song,  
 " Raging, maddening, haste along  
 Bacchus' daughters, ye the pride  
 Of golden Tmolus' fabled side ;  
 While your heavy cymbals ring,  
 Still your 'Evoë ! Evoë !' sing !"



TIR. No wile, no paltering with the deities.  
 The ancestral faith, coeval with our race,  
 No subtle reasoning, if it soar aloft  
 Even to the height of wisdom, can o'erthrow.  
 Some one will say that I disgrace mine age,  
 Rapt in the dance, and ivy-crowned my head.  
 The Gods admit no difference: old or young,  
 All it behoves to mingle in the rite.  
 From all he will receive the common honour,  
 Nor deign to count his countless votaries.

CAD. Since thou, Tiresias, seest not day's sweet light,  
 I, as thy Seer, must tell thee what is coming.  
 Lo, Pentheus, hurrying homewards to his palace,  
 Echion's son, to whom I have given the kingdom.  
 He is strangely moved! What new thing will he say?

PEN. I have been absent from this land, and hear  
 Of strange and evil doings in the city.  
 Our women all have left their homes, to join  
 These fabled mysteries. On the shadowy rocks  
 Frequent they sit, this God of yesterday,  
 Dionysus, whosoe'er he be, with revels  
 Dishonourable honouring. In the midst  
 Stand the crowned goblets; and each stealing forth,  
 This way and that, creeps to a lawless bed;  
 In pretext, holy sacrificing Mænads,  
 But serving Aphrodite more than Bacchus.  
 All whom I've apprehended, in their gyves  
 Our officers guard in the public prison.  
 Those that have 'scaped I'll hunt from off the mountains,  
 Ino, Agave who to Echion bare me,  
 Her too, Autonoe, Antæus' mother;  
 And fettering them all in iron bonds,  
 I'll put an end to their mad wickedness.  
 'Tis said a stranger hath appeared among us,  
 A wizard, sorcerer, from the land of Lydia,  
 Beauteous with golden locks and purple cheeks,  
 Eyes moist with Aphrodite's melting fire.  
 And day and night he is with the throng, to guile  
 Young maidens to the soft inebriate rites.

But if I catch him 'neath this roof, I'll silence  
 The beating of his thyrsus, stay his locks'  
 Wild tossing, from his body severing his neck.  
 He, say they, is the new God, Dionysus,  
 That was sewn up within the thigh of Jove.  
 He, with his mother, guiltily that boasted  
 Herself Jove's bride, was blasted by the lightning.  
 Are not such deeds deserving the base halter?  
 Sin heaped on sin! who'er this stranger be.

But lo, new wonders! see I not Tiresias,  
 The prophet, in the dappled fawn-skin clad?  
 My mother's father too (a sight for laughter!)  
 Tossing his hair? My sire, I blush for thee;  
 Beholding thine old age thus fatuous grown.  
 Wilt not shake off that ivy? free thine hand  
 From that unseemly wand, my mother's father!  
 This is thy work, Tiresias. This new God  
 Wilt thou instal 'mongst men, at higher price  
 To vend new auspices, and well paid offerings.  
 If thine old age were not thy safeguard, thou  
 Shouldst pine in chains among the Bacchanal women.  
 False teacher of new rites! For where 'mong women  
 The grape's sweet poison mingles with the feast,  
 Nought holy may we augur of such worship.

CHOR. Oh impious! dost thou not revere the Gods,  
 Nor Cadmus, who the earth-born harvest sowed?  
 Echion's son! how dost thou shame thy lineage!

TIR. 'Tis easy to be eloquent, for him  
 That's skilled in speech, and hath a stirring theme.  
 Thou hast the flowing tongue as of a wise man,  
 But there's no wisdom in thy fluent words;  
 For the bold demagogue, powerful in speech,  
 Is but a dangerous citizen, lacking sense.  
 This the new deity thou laugh'st to scorn,  
 I may not say how mighty he will be  
 Throughout all Hellas. Youth! there are two things  
 Man's primal need, Demeter, the boon Goddess  
 (Or rather will ye call her Mother Earth?),  
 With solid food maintains the race of man.

He, on the other hand, the son of Semele,  
Found out the grape's rich juice, and taught us mortals  
That which beguiles the miserable of mankind  
Of sorrow, when they quaff the vine's rich stream.  
Sleep too, and drowsy oblivion of care  
He gives, all-healing medicine of our woes.  
He 'mong the gods is worshipped a great god,  
Author confessed to man of such rich blessings.  
Him dost thou laugh to scorn, as in Jove's thigh  
Sewn up. This truth profound will I unfold :  
When Jove had snatched him from the lightning-fire,  
He to Olympus bore the new-born babe.  
Stern Herè strove to thrust him out of heaven,  
But Jove encountered her with wiles divine :  
He clove off part of th' earth-encircling air,  
There Dionysus placed the pleasing hostage,  
Aloof from jealous Herè. So men said  
Hereafter he was cradled in Jove's thigh  
(From the assonance of words in our old tongue  
For thigh and hostage the wild fable grew).  
A prophet is our god, for Bacchanalism  
And madness are alike prophetic.  
And when the god comes down in all his power,  
He makes the mad to rave of things to come.  
Of Ares he hath attributes : he the host  
In all its firm array and serried arms,  
With panic fear scatters, ere lance cross lance :  
From Dionysus springs this frenzy too.

And him shall we behold on Delphi's crags  
Leaping, with his pine torches lighting up  
The rifts of the twin-headed rock ; and shouting  
And shaking all around his Bacchic wand  
Great through all Hellas. Pentheus, be advised !  
Vaunt not thy power o'er man, even if thou thinkest  
That thou art wise (it is diseased, thy thought).  
Think it not ! In the land receive the god.  
Pour wine, and join the dance, and crown thy brows.  
Dionysus does not force our modest matrons  
To the soft Cyprian rites ; the chaste by nature

Are not so cheated of their chastity.  
 Think well of this, for in the Bacchic choir  
 The holy woman will not be less holy.  
 Thou'rt proud, when men to greet thee throng the gates,  
 And the glad city welcomes Pentheus' name ;  
 He too, I ween, delights in being honoured.

I, therefore, and old Cadmus whom thou mock'st,  
 Will crown our heads with ivy, dance along  
 An hoary pair—for dance perforce we must ;  
 I war not with the gods. Follow my counsel ;  
 Thou'rt at the height of madness, there's no medicine  
 Can minister to disease so deep as thine.

CHOR. Old man ! thou sham'st not Phœbus thine own god.  
 Wise art thou worshipping that great god Bromius.

CAD. My son ! Tiresias well hath counselled thee ;  
 Dwell safe with us within the pale of law.  
 Now thou fliest high : thy sense is void of sense.  
 Even if, as thou declar'st, he were no god,  
 Call thou him god. It were a splendid falsehood  
 If Semele be thought t' have borne a god ;  
 'Twere honour unto us and to our race.  
 Hast thou not seen Actæon's wretched fate ?  
 The dogs he bred, who fed from his own board,  
 Rent him in wrath to pieces ; for he vaunted  
 Than Artemis to be a mightier hunter.  
 So do not thou : come, let me crown thine head  
 With ivy, and with us adore the god.

PEN. Hold off thine hand ! Away ! Go rave and dance,  
 And wipe not off thy folly upon me.  
 On him, thy folly's teacher, I will wreak  
 Instant relentless justice. Some one go,  
 The seats from which he spies the flight of birds—  
 False augur—with the iron forks o'erthrow,  
 Scattering in wild confusion all abroad,  
 And cast his chaplets to the winds and storms ;  
 Thou'lt gall him thus, gall to the height of bitterness.  
 Ye to the city ! seek that stranger out,  
 That womanly man, who with this new disease  
 Afflicts our matrons, and defiles their beds :



Seize him and bring him hither straight in chains,  
That he may suffer stoning, that dread death.  
Such be his woful orgies here in Thebes.

TIR. Oh, miserable ! That know'st not what thou sayest,  
Crazed wert thou, now thou'rt at the height of madness :  
But go we, Cadmus, and pour forth our prayer,  
Even for this savage and ungodly man.  
And for our city, lest the god o'ertake us  
With some strange vengeance.

Come with thy ivy staff,

Lean thou on me, and I will lean on thee :  
'Twere sad for two old men to fall, yet go  
We must, and serve great Bacchus, son of Jove.  
What woe, O Cadmus, will this woe-named man  
Bring to thine house ! I speak not now as prophet,  
But a plain simple fact : fools still speak folly.

CHOR. Holy goddess ! Goddess old !  
Holy ! thou the crown of gold  
In the nether realm that wearest,  
Pentheus' awful speech thou hearest,  
Hearest his insulting tone  
'Gainst Semele's immortal son,  
Bromius, of gods the first and best.  
At every gay and flower-crowned feast,  
His the dance's jocund strife,  
And the laughter with the fife,  
Every care and grief to lull,  
When the sparkling wine-cup full  
Crowns the gods' banquets, or lets fall  
Sweet sleep on the eyes of men at mortal festival.

Of tongue unbridled without awe,  
Of madness spurning holy law,  
Sorrow is the Jove-doomed close ;  
But the life of calm repose  
And modest reverence holds her state  
Unbroken by disturbing fate ;  
And knits whole houses in the tie  
Of sweet domestic harmony.

Beyond the range of mortal eyes  
 'Tis not wisdom to be wise.  
 Life is brief, the present clasp,  
 Nor after some bright future grasp.  
 Such were the wisdom, as I ween,  
 Only of frantic and ill-counselled men.

Oh, would to Cyprus I might roam,  
 Soft Aphrodite's isle,  
 Where the young loves have their perennial home,  
 That soothe men's hearts with tender guile :  
 Or to that wondrous shore where ever  
 The hundred-mouthed barbaric river  
 Makes teem with wealth the showerless land !  
 O lead me ! lead me, till I stand,  
 Bromius !—sweet Bromius !—where high swelling  
 Soars the Pierian muses' dwelling—  
 Olympus' summit hoar and high—  
 Thou revel-loving deity !  
 For there are all the graces,  
 And sweet desire is there,  
 And to those hallowed places  
 To lawful rites the Bacchanals repair.  
 The deity, the son of Jove,  
 The banquet is his joy,  
 Peace, the wealth-giver, doth he love,  
 That nurse of many a noble boy.  
 Not the rich man's sole possessing ;  
 To the poor the painless blessing  
 Gives he of the wine-cup bright.  
 Him he hates, who day and night,  
 Gentle night, and gladsome day,  
 Cares not thus to while away.  
 Be thou wisely unsevere !  
 Shun the stern and the austere !  
 Follow the multitude ;  
 Their usage still pursue !  
 Their homely wisdom rude  
 (Such is my sentence) is both right and true.

OFFICER. Pentheus, we are here ! In vain we went not forth ;  
 The prey which thou commandest we have taken.  
 Gentle our quarry met us, nor turned back  
 His foot in flight, but held out both his hands ;  
 Became not pale, changed not his ruddy colour.  
 Smiling he bade us bind, and lead him off,  
 Stood still, and made our work a work of ease.  
 Reverent I said, " Stranger, I arrest thee not  
 Of mine own will, but by the king's command."  
 But all the Bacchanals, whom thou hadst seized  
 And bound in chains within the public prison,  
 All now have disappeared, released they are leaping  
 In their wild orgies, hymning the god Bacchus.  
 Spontaneous fell the chains from off their feet ;  
 The bolts drew back untouched by mortal hand.  
 In truth this man, with many wonders rife  
 Comes to our Thebes. 'Tis thine t' ordain the rest.

PEN. Bind fast his hands ! Thus in his manacles  
 Sharp must he be indeed to 'scape us now.  
 There's beauty, stranger — woman-witching beauty  
 (Therefore thou art in Thebes — in thy soft form ;  
 Thy fine bright hair, not coarse like the hard athlete's,  
 Is mantling o'er thy cheek warm with desire ;  
 And carefully thou hast cherished thy white skin ;  
 Not in the sun's swart beams, but in cool shade,  
 Wooing soft Aphrodite with thy loveliness.  
 But tell me first, from whence hath sprung thy race ?

DIO. There needs no boast ; 'tis easy to tell this :  
 Of flowery Tmolus hast thou haply heard ?

PEN. Yea ; that which girds around the Sardinian city.

DIO. Thence am I come, my country Lydia.

PEN. Whence unto Helias bringest thou thine orgies ?

DIO. Dionysus, son of Jove, hath hallowed them.

PEN. Is there a Jove then, that begets new gods ?

DIO. No, it was here he wedded Semele.

PEN. Hallowed he them by night, or in the eye of day ?

DIO. In open vision he revealed his orgies.

PEN. And what, then, is thine orgies' solemn form ?

DIO. That is not uttered to the uninitiate.

PEN. What profit, then, is theirs who worship him?

DIO. Thou mayst not know, though precious were that knowledge.

PEN. A cunning tale, to make me long to hear thee.

DIO. The orgies of our god scorn impious worshippers.

PEN. Thou saw'st the manifest god! What was his form?

DIO. Whate'er he would: it was not mine to choose.

PEN. Cleverly blinked our question with no answer.

DIO. Who wiseliest speaks, to the fool speaks foolishness.

PEN. And hither com'st thou first with thy new god!

DIO. There's no Barbarian but adores these rites.

PEN. Being much less wise than we Hellenians.

DIO. In this more wise. Their customs differ much.

PEN. Performest thou these rites by night or day?

DIO. Most part by night—night hath more solemn awe.

PEN. A crafty rotten plot to catch our women.

DIO. Even in the day bad men can do bad deeds.

PEN. Thou of thy wiles shalt pay the penalty.

DIO. Thou of thine ignorance—impious towards the gods!

PEN. He's bold, this Bacchus—ready enough in words.

DIO. What penalty? what evil wilt thou do me?

PEN. First will I clip away those soft bright locks.

DIO. My locks are holy, dedicate to my god.

PEN. Next, give thou me that thyrsus in thine hand.

DIO. Take it thyself; 'tis Dionysus' wand.

PEN. I'll bind thy body in strong iron chains.

DIO. My god himself will loose them when he will.

PEN. When thou invok'st him 'mid thy Bacchanals.

DIO. Even now he is present; he beholds me now.

PEN. Where is he then? Mine eyes perceive him not.

DIO. Near me: the impious eyes may not discern him.

PEN. Seize on him, for he doth insult our Thebes.

DIO. I warn thee, bind me not; the insane, the sane.

PEN. I, stronger than thou art, say I will bind thee.

DIO. Thou know'st not where thou art, or what thou art.

PEN. Pentheus, Agave's son, my sire Echion.

DIO. Thou hast a name whose very sound is woe.

PEN. Away, go bind him in our royal stable,

That he may sit in midnight gloom profound:

There lead thy dance ! But these thou hast hither led,  
 Thy guilt's accomplices, we'll sell for slaves ;  
 Or, silencing their noise and beating drums,  
 As handmaids to the distaff set them down.

DIO. Away then ! 'Tis not well I bear such wrong ;  
 The vengeance for this outrage he will wreak  
 Whose being thou deniest, Dionysus :  
 Outraging me, ye bind him in your chains.

CHOR. Holy virgin-haunted water !  
 Ancient Achelous' daughter !  
 Dirce ! in thy crystal wave  
 Thou the child of Jove didst lave.  
 Thou, when Zeus, his awful sire,  
 Snatched him from the immortal fire ;  
 And locked him up within his thigh,  
 With a loud but gentle cry—  
 " Come, my Dithyrambus, come,  
 Enter thou the masculine womb ! "

Lo ! to Thebes I thus proclaim,  
 " Twice born ! " thus thy mystic name.  
 Blessed Dirce ! dost thou well  
 From thy green marge to repel  
 Me, and all my jocund round,  
 With their ivy garlands crowned.

Why dost fly me ?

Why deny me ?

By all the joys of wine I swear,  
 Bromius still shall be my care.

Oh, what pride ! pride unforgiven  
 Manifests, against high heaven  
 Th' earth-born, whom in mortal birth  
 'Gat Echion, son of earth ;  
 Pentheus of the dragon brood,  
 Not of human flesh and blood ;  
 But portent dire, like him whose pride,  
 The Titan, all the gods defied.  
 Me, great Bromius' handmaid true ;  
 Me, with all my festive crew,

Thralled in chains he still would keep  
In his palace dungeon deep.

Seest thou this, O son of Jove,  
Dionysus, from above?  
Thy rapt prophets dost thou see  
At strife with dark necessity?

The golden wand  
In thy right hand.

Come, come thou down Olympus' side,  
And quell the bloody tyrant in his pride.

Art thou holding revel now  
On Nysas' wild beast-haunted brow?  
Is't thy Thyasus that clammers  
O'er Corycia's mountain chambers?  
Or on Olympus, thick with wood,  
With his harp where Orpheus stood,  
And led the forest trees along,  
Led the wild beasts with his song.

O Pieria, blessed land,  
Evius hallows thee, advancing,  
With his wild choir's mystic dancing.

Over rapid Axius' strand  
He shall pass; o'er Lydia's tide  
Then his whirling Mænads guide.  
Lydia, parent boon of health,  
Giver to man of boundless wealth;  
Washing many a sunny mead,  
Where the prancing coursers feed.

DIO. What ho! what ho! ye Bacchanals!  
Rouse and wake! your master calls.

CHOR. Who is here? and what is he  
That calls upon our wandering train?

DIO. What ho! what ho! I call again!

The son of Jove and Semele.

CHOR. What ho! what ho! our lord and master:  
Come, with footsteps fast and faster,  
Join our revel! Bromius, speed,  
Till quakes the earth beneath our tread.  
Alas! alas!

Soon shall Pentheus' palace wall  
Shake and crumble to its fall.

DIO. Bacchus treads the palace floor !  
Adore him !

CHOR. Oh ! we do adore !  
Behold ! behold !

The pillars with their weight above,  
Of ponderous marble, shake and move.  
Hark ! the trembling roof within  
Bacchus shouts his mighty din.

DIO. The kindling lamp of the dark lightning bring !  
Fire, fire the palace of the guilty king.

CHOR. Behold ! behold ! it flames ! Do ye not see,  
Around the sacred tomb of Semele,  
The blaze, that left the lightning there,  
When Jove's red thunder fired the air ?  
On the earth, supine and low,  
Your shuddering limbs, ye Mænads, throw !  
The king, the Jove-born god, destroying all,  
In widest ruin strews the palace wall.

DIO. O, ye Barbarian women, Thus prostrate in dismay ;  
Upon the earth ye've fallen ! See ye not, as ye may,  
How Bacchus Pentheus' palace In wrath hath shaken down ?  
Rise up ! rise up ! take courage—Shake off that trembling swoon.

CHOR. O light that goodliest shinest Over our mystic rite,  
In state forlorn we saw thee—Saw with what deep affright !

DIO. How to despair ye yielded As I boldly entered in  
To Pentheus, as if captured, Into the fatal gin.

CHOR. How could I less ? Who guards us If thou shouldst  
come to woe ?

But how wast thou delivered From thy ungodly fate ?

DIO. Myself, myself delivered, With ease and effort slight.

CHOR. Thy hands, had he not bound them, In halters strong  
and tight ?

DIO. 'Twas even then I mocked him : He thought me in his  
chain ; [vain !

He touched me not, nor reached me ; His idle thoughts were  
In the stable stood a heifer, Where he thought he had me bound :  
Round the beast's knees his cords And cloven hoofs he wound.

Wrath-breathing, from his body The sweat fell like a flood :  
 He bit his lips in fury, While I beside who stood  
 Looked on in unmoved quiet.

As at a that instant come,  
 Shook Bacchus the strong palace, And on his mother's tomb  
 Flames kindled. When he saw it, On fire the palace deeming,  
 Hither he rushed and thither, For "water, water," screaming ;  
 And every slave 'gan labour, But laboured all in vain.  
 The toil he soon abandoned. As though I had fled again  
 He rushed into the palace : In his hand the dark sword gleamed.  
 Then, as it seemed, great Bromius—I say, but as it seemed—  
 In the hall a bright light kindled. On that he rushed, and there,  
 As slaying me in vengeance, Stood stabbing the thin air.  
 But then the avenging Bacchus Wrought new calamities ;  
 From roof to base that palace In smouldering ruin lies.  
 Bitter ruing our imprisonment, With toil forspent he threw  
 On earth his usele-s weapon. Mortal, he had dared to do  
 'Gainst a god unholy battle. But I, in quiet state,  
 Unheeding Pentheus' anger, Came through the palace gate.  
 It seems even now his sandal Is sounding on its way :  
 Soon is he here before us, And what now will he say ?  
 With ease will I confront him, Ire-breathing though he stand.  
 'Tis easy to a wise man To practise self-command.

PEN. I am outraged—mocked ! The stranger hath escaped me  
 Whom I so late had bound in iron chains.

Off, off ! He is here !—the man ? How's this ? How stands he  
 Before our palace, as just issuing forth ?

DIO. Stay thou thy step ! Subdue thy wrath to peace !

PEN. How, having burst thy chains, hast thou come forth ?

DIO. Said I not—heardst thou not ? "There's one will free  
 me !"

PEN. What one ? Thou speakest still words new and strange.

DIO. He who for man plants the rich-tendrilled vine.

PEN. Well layest thou this reproach on Dionysus.

Without there, close and bar the towers around !

DIO. What ! and the gods ! O'erleap they not all walls ?

PEN. Wise in all wisdom save in that thou shouldst have !

DIO. In that I should have wisest still am I.

But listen first, and hear the words of him



Who comes to thee with tidings from the mountains.

Here will we stay. Fear not, we will not fly !

MES. Pentheus, that rulest o'er this land of Thebes !

I come from high Cithæron, ever white

With the bright glittering snow's perennial rays.

PEN. Why com'st thou ? On what pressing mission bound ?

MES. I've seen the frenzied Bacchanals, who had fled

On their white feet, forth goaded from the land.

I come to tell to thee and to this city

The awful deeds they do, surpassing wonder.

But answer first, if I shall freely say

All that's done there, or furl my prudent speech ;

For thy quick temper I do fear, O king,

Thy sharp resentment and o'er-royal pride.

PEN. Speak freely. Thou shalt part unharmed by me ;

Wrath were not seemly 'gainst the unoffending.

But the more awful what thou sayst of these

Mad women, I the more on him, who hath guiled them

To their wild life, will wreak my just revenge.

MES. Mine herds of heifers I was driving, slow

Winding their way along the mountain crags,

When the sun pours his full beams on the earth.

I saw three bands, three choirs of women : one

Autonoe led, thy mother led the second,

Agave—and the third Ino : and all

Quietly slept, their languid limbs stretched out :

Some resting on the ash-trees' stem their tresses ;

Some with their heads upon the oak-leaves thrown

Careless, but not immodest ; as thou sayest,

That drunken with the goblet and shrill life

In the dusk woods they prowl for lawless love.

Thy mother, as she heard the hornéd steers

Deep lowing, stood up 'mid the Bacchanals

And shouted loud to wake them from their rest.

They from their lids shaking the freshening sleep,

Rose upright, wonderful in their decent guise,

The young, the old, the maiden yet unwed.

And first they loosed their locks over their shoulders.

The r fawn-skins fastened, wheresoe'er the clasps

Had lost their hold, and all the dappled furs  
With serpents bound, that lolled out their lithe tongues.  
Some in their arms held kid, or wild-wolf's cub,  
Suckling it with her white milk ; all the young mothers  
Who had left their new-born babes, and stood with breasts  
Full swelling : and they all put on their crowns  
Of ivy, oak, or flowering eglantine.  
One took a thyrsus wand, and struck the rock,  
Leaped forth at once a dewy mist of water ;  
And one her rod plunged deep in the earth, and there  
The god sent up a fountain of bright wine.  
And all that longed for the white blameless draught  
Light scraping with their finger-ends the soil  
Had streams of exquisite milk ; the ivy wands  
Distilled from all their tops rich store of honey.

Hadst thou been there, seeing these things, the god  
Thou now revil'st thou hadst adored with prayer.

And we, herdsmen and shepherds, gathered around.  
And there was strife among us in our words  
Of these strange things they did, these marvellous things.  
One city-bred, a glib and practised speaker,  
Addressed us thus : " Ye that inhabit here  
The holy mountain slopes, shall we not chase  
Agave, Pentheus' mother, from the Bacchanals,  
And win the royal favour ? " Well to us  
He seemed to speak ; so, crouched in the thick bushes,  
We lay in ambush. They at the appointed hour  
Shook their wild thyrsi in the Bacchic dance,  
" Iacchus " with one voice, the son of Jove,  
" Bromius " invoking. The hills danced with them ;  
And the wild beasts ; was nothing stood unmoved.

And I leaped forth, as though to seize on her,  
Leaving the sedge where I had hidden myself.  
But she shrieked out, " Ho, my swift-footed dogs !  
These men would hunt us down, but follow me—  
Follow me, all your hands with thyrsi armed."  
We fled amain, or by the Bacchanals  
We had been torn in pieces. They, with hands  
Unarmed with iron, rushed on the browsing steers.

One ye might see a young and vigorous heifer  
 Hold, lowing in her grasp, like prize of war.  
 And some were tearing asunder the young calves ;  
 And ye might see the ribs or cloven hoofs  
 Hurl'd wildly up and down, and mangled skins  
 Were hanging from the ash boughs, dropping blood.  
 The wanton bulls, proud of their tossing horns  
 Of yore, fell stumbling, staggering to the ground,  
 Dragged down by the strong hands of thousand maidens.  
 And swifter were the entrails torn away  
 Than drop the lids over your royal eyeballs.

Like birds that skim the earth, they glide along  
 O'er the wide plains, that by Asopus' streams  
 Shoot up for Thebes the rich and yellow corn ;  
 And Hysie and Erythre, that beneath  
 Cithæron's crag dwell lowly, like fierce foes  
 Invading, all with ravage waste and wide  
 Confounded : infants snatched from their sweet homes ;  
 And what they threw across their shoulders, clung  
 Unfastened, nor fell down to the black ground.  
 No brass, nor ponderous iron : on their locks  
 Was fire that burned them not. Of those they spoiled  
 Some in their sudden fury rushed to arms.  
 Then was a mightier wonder seen, O king :  
 From them the pointed lances drew no blood.  
 But they their thyrsi hurling, javelin-like,  
 Drave all before, and smote their shameful backs :  
 Women drave men, but not without the god.

So did they straight return from whence they came,  
 Even to the fountains, which the god made flow ;  
 Washed off the blood, and from their cheeks the drops  
 The serpents licked, and made them bright and clean.  
 This godhead then, whoe'er he be, my master !  
 Receive within our city. Great in all things,  
 In this I hear men say he is the greatest :—  
 He hath given the sorrow-soothing vine to man  
 For where wine is not love will never be,  
 Nor any other joy of human life.

CHOR. I am afraid to speak the words of freedom

Before the tyrant, yet it must be said :

"Inferior to no god is Dionysus."

PEN. 'Tis here then, like a wild fire, burning on,  
This Bacchic insolence, Hellas' deep disgrace.  
Off with delay ! Go to the Electrian gates  
And summon all that bear the shield, and all  
The cavalry upon their prancing steeds,  
And those that couch the lance, and of the bow  
Twang the sharp string. Against these Bacchanals  
We will go war. It were indeed too much  
From women to endure what we endure.

DIO. Thou wilt not be persuaded by my words,  
Pentheus ! Yet though of thee I have suffered wrong,  
I warn thee, rise not up against the god.  
Rest thou in peace. Bromius will never brook  
Ye drive his Mænads from their mountain haunts.

PEN. Wilt teach me ? Better fly and save thyself,  
Ere yet I wreak stern justice upon thee.

DIO. Rather do sacrifice, than in thy wrath  
Kick 'gainst the pricks—a mortal 'gainst a god.

PEN. I'll sacrifice, and in Cithæron's glens,  
As they deserve, a hecatomb of women.

DIO. Soon will ye fly. 'Twere shame that shields of brass  
Before the Bacchic thyrsi turn in rout.

PEN. I am bewildered by this dubious stranger ;  
Doing or suffering, he holds not his peace.

DIO. My friend ! Thou still mayest bring this to good end.

PEN. How so ? By being the slave of mine own slaves ?

DIO. These women—without force of arms, I'll bring them.

PEN. Alas ! he is plotting now some wile against me !

DIO. But what if I could save thee by mine arts ?

PEN. Ye are all in league, that ye may hold your orgies.

DIO. I am in a league 'tis true, but with the god !

PEN. Bring out mine armour ! Thou, have done thy speech !

DIO. Ha ! wouldst thou see them seated on the mountains ?

PEN. Ay ! for the sight give thousand weight of gold.

DIO. Why hast thou fallen upon this strange desire ?

PEN. 'Twere grief to see them in their drunkenness.

DIO. Yet gladly wouldst thou see, what seen would grieve thee.

PEN. Mark well ! in silence seated 'neath the ash-trees.

DIO. But if thou goest in secret they will scent thee.

PEN. Best openly, in this thou hast said well.

DIO. But if we lead thee, wilt thou dare the way?

PEN. Lead on, and swiftly! Let no time be lost!

DIO. But first enwrap thee in these linen robes.

PEN. What, will he of a man make me a woman!

DIO. Lest they should kill thee, seeing thee as a man.

PEN. Well dost thou speak; so spake the wise of old.

DIO. Dionysus hath instructed me in this.

PEN. How then can we best do what thou advisest?

DIO. I'll enter in the house, and there array thee.

PEN. What dress? A woman's? I am ashamed to wear it.

DIO. Art thou not eager to behold the Mænads?

PEN. And what dress sayst thou I must wrap around me?

DIO. I'll smooth thine hair down lightly on thy brow.

PEN. What is the second portion of my dress?

DIO. Robes to thy feet, a bonnet on thine head.

PEN. Wilt thou array me then in more than this?

DIO. A thyrsus in thy hand, a dappled fawn-skin.

PEN. I cannot clothe me in a woman's dress.

DIO. Thou wilt have bloodshed, warring on the Mænads.

PEN. 'Tis right, I must go first survey the field.

DIO. 'Twere wiser than to hunt evil with evil.

PEN. How pass the city, unseen of the Thebans?

DIO. We'll go by lone byways; I'll lead thee safe.

PEN. Augit better than be mocked by these loose Bacchanals.

When we come back, we'll counsel what were best.

DIO. Even as you will: I am here at your command.

PEN. So let us on; I must go forth in arms,

Or follow the advice thou givest me.

DIO. Women! this man is in our net; he goes

To find his just doom 'mid the Bacchanals.

Dionysus, to thy work! thou'rt not far off;

Vengeance is ours. Bereave him first of sense;

Yet be his frenzy slight. In his right mind

He never had put on a woman's dress;

But now, thus shaken in his mind, he'll wear it.

A laughing-stock I'll make him to ail Thebes,

Led in a woman's dress through the wide city,

For those fierce threats in which he was so great.

But I must go, and Pentheus—in the garb  
Which wearing, even by his own mother's hand  
Slain, he goes down to Hades. Know he must  
Dionysus, son of Jove, among the gods  
Mightiest, yet mildest to the sons of men.

CHOR. O when, through the long night,  
With fleet foot glancing white,  
Shall I go dancing in my revelry,  
My neck cast back, and bare  
Unto the dewy air,  
Like sportive fawn in the green meadow's glee?  
Lo, in her fear she springs  
Over th' encircling rings,  
Over the well-woven nets far off and fast;  
While swift along her track  
The huntsman cheers his pack,  
With panting toil, and fiery storm-wind haste.  
Where down the river-bank spreads the wide meadow,  
Rejoices she in the untrod solitude.  
Couches at length beneath the silent shadow  
Of the old hospitable wood.

What is wisest? what is fairest,  
Of god's boons to man the rarest?  
With the conscious conquering hand  
Above the foeman's head to stand.  
What is fairest still is dearest.

Slow come, but come at length,  
In their majestic strength,  
Faithful and true, the avenging deities:  
And chastening human folly,  
And the mad pride unholy,  
Of those who to the gods bow not their knees.  
For hidden still and mute,  
As glides their printless foot,  
The impious on their winding path they hound.  
For it is ill to know,  
And it is ill to do,  
Beyond the law's inexorable bound.

'Tis but light cost in his own power sublime  
To array the godhead, whosoe'er he be ;  
And law is old, even as the oldest time,  
Nature's own unrepealed decree.

What is wisest ? what is fairest,  
Of god's boons to man the rarest ?  
With the conscious conquering hand  
Above the foeman's head to stand.  
What is fairest still is rarest.

Who hath 'scaped the turbulent sea,  
And reached the haven, happy he !  
Happy he whose toils are o'er,  
In the race of wealth and power !  
This one here, and that one there,  
Passes by, and everywhere  
Still expectant thousands over  
Thousand hopes are seen to hover.  
Some to mortals end in bliss ;  
Some have already fled away :  
Happiness alone is his  
That happy is to-day.

DIO. Thou art mad to see that which thou shouldst not see,  
And covetous of that thou shouldst not covet,  
Pentheus ! I say, come forth ! Appear before me,  
Clothed in the Bacchic Maenads' womanly dress ;  
Spy on thy mother and her holy crew,  
Come like in form to one of Cadmus' daughters.

PEN. Ha ! now indeed two suns I seem to see,  
A double Thebes, two seven-gated cities ;  
Thou, as a bull, seemest to go before me,  
And horns have grown upon thine head. Art thou  
A beast indeed ? Thou seem'st a very bull.

DIO. The god is with us ; unpropitious once,  
But now at truce : now seest thou what thou shouldst see ?

PEN. What see I ? Is not that the step of Ino ?  
And is not Agave there, my mother ?

DIO. Methinks 'tis even they whom thou behold'st ;

But, lo ! this tress hath strayed out of its place,  
Not as I braided it, beneath thy bonnet.

PEN. Tossing it this way now, now tossing that,  
In Bacchic glee, I have shaken it from its place.

DIO. But we, whose charge it is to watch o'er thee,  
Will braid it up again. Lift up thy head.

PEN. Braid as thou wilt, we yield ourselves to thee.

DIO. Thy zone is loosened, and thy robe's long folds  
Droop outward, nor conceal thine ankles now.

PEN. Around my right foot so it seems, yet sure  
Around the other it sits close and well.

DIO. Wilt thou not hold me for thy best of friends,  
Thus strangely seeing the coy Bacchanals ?

PEN. The thyrsus—in my right hand shall I hold it ?  
Or thus am I more like a Bacchanal ?

DIO. In thy right hand, and with thy right foot raise it.  
I praise the change of mind now come o'er thee.

PEN. Could I not now bear up upon my shoulders  
Cithæron's crag, with all the Bacchanals ?

DIO. Thou couldst if 'twere thy will. In thy right mind  
Erewhile thou wast not ; now thou art as thou shouldst be.

PEN. Shall I take levers, pluck it up with my hands,  
Or thrust mine arm or shoulder 'neath its base ?

DIO. Destroy thou not the dwellings of the nymphs,  
The seats where Pan sits piping in his joy.

PEN. Well hast thou said ; by force we conquer not  
These women. I'll go hide in yonder ash.

DIO. Within a fatal ambush wilt thou hide thee,  
Stealing, a treacherous spy, upon the Maenads.

PEN. And now I seem to see them there like birds  
Couching on their soft beds amid the fern.

DIO. Art thou not therefore set as watchman o'er them ?  
Thou'lt seize them—if they do not seize thee first.

PEN. Lead me triumphant through the land of Thebes !  
I, only I, have dared a deed like this.

DIO. Thou art the city's champion, thou alone.  
There is a strife thou wot'st not of awaits thee.

Follow me ! thy preserver goes before thee ;  
Another takes thee hence.



PEN.

Mean'st thou my mother?

DIO. Aioft shalt thou be borne.

PEN.

O the soft carriage!

DIO. In thy mother's hands.

PEN.

Wilt make me thus luxurious?

DIO. Strange luxury, indeed!

PEN.

'Tis my desert.

DIO. Thou art awful!—awful! Doomed to awful end!

Thy glory shall soar up to the high heavens!

Stretch forth thine hand, Agave!—ye her kin,

Daughters of Cadmus! To a terrible grave

Lead I this youth! Myself shall win the prize—

Bromius and I: the event will show the rest.

CHOR. Ho! fleet dogs and furious, to the mountains, ho!  
Where their mystic revels Cadmus' daughters keep.

Rouse them, goad them out,

Gainst him, in woman's mimic garb concealed,

Gazer on the Menads in their dark rites unrevealed.

First his mother shall behold him on his watch below,

From the tall tree's trunk or from the wild scaur steep;

Fiercely will she shout—

"Who the spy upon the Menads on the rocks that roam  
To the mountain, to the mountain, Bacchanals, has come?"

Who hath borne him?

He is not of woman's blood—

The lioness!

Or the Lybian Gorgon's brood?

Come, vengeance, come, display thee!

With thy bright sword array thee!

The bloody sentence wreak

On the dissevered neck

Of him who god, law, justice hath not known,

Echion's earth-born son.

He, with thought unrighteous and unholy pride,  
Gainst Bacchus and his mother, their orgies' mystic mirth

Still holds his frantic strife,

And sets him up against the god, deeming it light

To vanquish the invincible of might.

Hold thou fast the pious mind ; so, only so, shall glide  
 In peace with gods above, in peace with men on earth,  
 Thy smooth painless life.

I admire not, envy not, who would be otherwise :  
 Mine be still the glory, mine be still the prize,

By night and day  
 To live of the immortal gods in awe ;  
 Who fears them not  
 Is but the outcast of all law.

Come, vengeance, come display thee !  
 With thy bright sword array thee !

The bloody sentence wreak  
 On the dissevered neck  
 Of him who god, law, justice has not known,  
 Echion's earth-born son.

Appear ! appear !  
 Or as the stately steer !  
 Or many-headed dragon be !  
 Or the fire-breathing lion, terrible to see.  
 Come, Bacchus, come 'gainst the hunter of the Bacchanals,  
 Even now, now as he falls  
 Upon the Mænads' fatal herd beneath,  
 With smiling brow,  
 Around him throw  
 The inexorable net of death.

MES. O house most prosperous once throughout all Hellas !  
 House of the old Sidonian !—in this land  
 Who sowed the dragon's serpent's earth-born harvest —  
 How I deplore thee ! I a slave, for still  
 Grieve for their master's sorrows faithful slaves.

CHOR. What's this ? Aught new about the Bacchanals ?

MES. Pentheus hath perished, old Echion's son.

CHOR. King Bromius, thou art indeed a mighty god !

MES. What sayst thou ? How is this ? Rejoicest thou  
 O woman, in my master's awful fate ?

CHOR. Light chants the stranger her barbarous strains :  
 I cower not in fear for the menace of chains.

MES. All Thebes thus void of courage deemest thou ?

CHOR. O Dionysus ! Dionysus ! Thebes  
Hath o'er me now no power.

MES. 'Tis pardonable, yet it is not well,  
Woman, in others' miseries to rejoice.

CHOR. Tell me, then, by what fate died the unjust—  
The man, the dark contriver of injustice ?

MES. Therapnæ having left the Theban city,  
And passed along Asopus' winding shore,  
We 'gan to climb Cithæron's upward steep—  
Pentheus and I (I waited on my lord),  
And he that led us on our quest, the stranger—  
And first we crept along a grassy glade,  
With silent footsteps, and with silent tongues,  
Slow moving, as to see, not being seen.  
There was a rock-walled glen, watered by a streamlet,  
And shadow'd o'er with pines : the Mænads there  
Sate, all their hands busy with pleasant toil ;  
And some the leafy thyrsus, that its ivy  
Had dropped away, were garlanding anew ;  
Like lillies some, unharnessed from the yoke ;  
Chanted alternate all the Bacchic hymn.  
Ill-fated Pentheus, as he scarce could see  
That womanly troop, spake thus : " Where we stand, stranger,  
We see not well the unseemly Mænad dance :  
But, mounting on a bank, or a tall tree,  
Clearly shall I behold their deeds of shame."

A wonder then I saw that stranger do.  
He seized an ash-tree's high heaven-reaching stem,  
And dragged it down, dragged, dragged to the low earth ;  
And like a bow it bent. As a curved wheel  
Becomes a circle in the turner's lathe,  
The stranger thus that mountain tree bent down  
To the earth, a deed of more than mortal strength.  
Then seating Pentheus on those ash-tree boughs,  
Upward he let it rise, steadily, gently  
Through his hands, careful lest it shake him off ;  
And slowly rose it upright to its height,  
Bearing my master seated on its ridge.  
There was he seen, rather than saw the Mænads,

More visible he could not be, seated aloft.  
The stranger from our view had vanished quite.  
Then from the heavens a voice, as it should seem  
Dionysus, shouted loud, "Behold! I bring,  
O maidens, him that you and me, our rites,  
Our orgies laughed to scorn; now take your vengeance."  
And as he spake, a light of holy fire  
Stood up, and blazed from earth straight up to heaven.  
Silent the air, silent the verdant grove  
Held its still leaves; no sound of living thing.  
They, as their ears just caught the half-heard voice,  
Stood up erect, and rolled their wondering eyes.  
Again he shouted. But when Cadmus' daughters  
Heard manifest the god's awakening voice,  
Forth rushed they, fleetier than the wingéd dove,  
Their nimble feet quick coursing up and down.  
Agave first, his mother, then her kin,  
The Mænads, down the torrent's bed, in the grove,  
From crag to crag they leaped, mad with the god.  
And first with heavy stones they hurled at him,  
Climbing a rock in front; the branches some  
Of the ash-tree darted; some like javelins  
Sent their sharp thyrsi through the sounding air,  
Pentheus their mark: but yet they struck him not;  
His height still baffled all their eager wrath.  
There sat the wretch, helpless in his despair.  
The oaken boughs, by lightning as struck off,  
Roots torn from the earth, but with no iron wedge,  
They hurled, but their wild labours all were vain.  
Agave spake, "Come all, and stand around,  
And grasp the tree, ye Mænads; soon we will seize  
The beast that rides thereon. He will ne'er betray  
The mysteries of our god." A thousand hands  
Were on the ash, and tore it from the earth:  
And he that sat aloft, down, headlong, down  
Fell to the ground, with thousand piteous shrieks,  
Pentheus, for well he knew his end was near.  
His mother first began the sacrifice,  
And fell on him. His bonnet from his hair

He threw, that she might know and so not slay him,  
The sad Agave. And he said, her cheek  
Fondling, "I am thy child, thine own, my mother!  
Pentheus, whom in Echion's house you bare.  
Have mercy on me, mother! For his sins,  
Whatever be his sins, kill not thy son."  
She, foaming at the mouth, her rolling eyeballs  
Whirling around, in her unreasoning reason,  
By Bacchus all possessed, knew, heeded not.  
She caught him in her arms, seized his right hand,  
And, with her feet set on his shrinking side,  
Tore out the shoulder—not with her own strength:  
The god made easy that too cruel deed.  
And Ino laboured on the other side,  
Rending the flesh: Autonoe, all the rest,  
Pressed fiercely on, and there was one wild din—  
He groaning deep, while he had breath to groan,  
They shouting triumph; and one bore an arm,  
One a still-sandalled foot; and both his sides  
Lay open, rent. Each in her bloody hand  
Tossed wildly to and fro lost Pentheus' limbs.  
The trunk lay far aloof, 'neath the rough rocks  
Part, part amid the forest's thick-strewn leaves,  
Not easy to be found. The wretched head,  
Which the mad mother, seizing in her hands,  
Had on a thyrsus fixed, she bore aloft  
All o'er Cithæron, as a mountain lion's,  
Leading her sisters in their Mænad dance.  
And she comes vaunting her ill-fated chase  
Unto these walls, invoking Bacchus still,  
Her fellow-hunter, partner in her prey,  
Her triumph—triumph soon to end in tears!  
I fled the sight of that dark tragedy,  
Hastening, ere yet Agave reached the palace.  
Oh! to be reverent, to adore the gods,  
This is the noblest, wisest course of man,  
Taking dread warning from this dire event.

CHOR.       Dance and sing  
              In Bacchic ring,

Shout, shout the fate, the fate of gloom,  
 Of Pentheus, from the dragon born ;  
 He the woman's garb hath worn,  
 Following the bull, the harbinger, that led him to his doom.

O ye Theban Bacchanals !  
 Attune ye now the hymn victorious,  
 The hymn all glorious,  
 To the tear, and to the groan !  
 O game of glory !  
 To bathe the hands besprent and gory,  
 In the blood of her own son.  
 But I behold Agave, Pentheus' mother,  
 Nearing the palace with distorted eyes.  
 Hail we the ovation of the Evian god.

AGA. O ye Asian Bacchanals !

CHOR. Who is she on us who calls ?

AGA. From the mountains, lo ! we bear  
 To the palace gate  
 Our new-slain quarry fair.

CHOR. I see, I see ! and on thy joy I wait.

AGA. Without a net, without a snare,  
 The lion's cub, I took him there

CHOR. In the wilderness, or where ?

AGA. Cithæron—

CHOR. Of Cithæron what ?

AGA. Gave him to slaughter.

CHOR. O blest Agave !

AGA. In thy song extol me,

CHOR. Who struck him first ?

AGA. Mine, mine, the glorious lot.

CHOR. Who else ?

AGA. Of Cadmus—

CHOR. What of Cadmus' daughter ?

AGA. With me, with me, did all the race  
 Hound the prey.

CHOR. O fortunate chase !

AGA. The banquet share with me !

CHOR. Alas ! what shall our banquet be ?

AGA. How delicate the kid and young !

The thin locks have but newly sprung  
Over his forehead fair.

CHOR. 'Tis beauteous as the tame beasts' cherished hair.

AGA. Bacchus, hunter known to fame!  
Did he not our Mænads bring  
On the track of this proud game?  
A mighty hunter is our king!  
Praise me! praise me!

CHOR. Praise I not thee?

AGA. Soon with the Thebans all, the hymn of praise  
Pentheus my son will to his mother raise:

For she the lion prey hath won,  
A noble deed and nobly done.

CHOR. Dost thou rejoice?

AGA. Ay, with exulting voice  
My great, great deed I elevate,  
Glorious as great.

CHOR. Sad woman, to the citizens of Thebes  
Now show the conquered prey thou bearest hither.

AGA. Ye that within the high-towered Theban city  
Dwell, come and gaze ye all upon our prey,  
The mighty beast by Cadmus' daughter ta'en;  
Nor with Thessalian sharp-pointed javelins,  
Nor nets, but with the white and delicate palms  
Of our own hands. Go ye, and make your boast,  
Trusting to the spear-maker's useless craft:  
We with these hands have ta'en our prey, and rent  
The mangled limbs of this grim beast asunder.

Where is mine aged sire? Let him draw near!  
And where is my son Pentheus? Let him mount  
On the broad stairs that rise before our house;  
And on the triglyph nail this lion's head,  
That I have brought him from our splendid chase.

CAD. Follow me, follow, bearing your sad burthen,  
My servants—Pentheus' body—to our house;  
The body that with long and weary search  
I found at length in Ione Cithæron's glens;  
Thus torn, not lying in one place, but wide  
Scattered amid the dark and tangled thicket.

Already, as I entered in the city  
 With old Tiresias, from the Bacchanals,  
 I heard the fearful doings of my daughter.  
 And back returning to the mountain, bear  
 My son, thus by the furious Mænads slain.  
 Her who Actæon bore to Aristæus,  
 Autonoe, I saw, and Ino with her  
 Still in the thicket goaded with wild madness.  
 And some one said that on her dancing feet  
 Agave had come hither—true he spoke ;  
 I see her now—O most unblessed sight !

AGA. Father, 'tis thy peculiar peerless boast  
 Of womanhood the noblest t' have begot—  
 Me—me the noblest of that noble kin.  
 For I the shuttle and the distaff left  
 For mightier deeds—wild beasts with mine own hands  
 To capture. Lo ! I bear within mine arms  
 These glorious trophies, to be hung on high  
 Upon thy house : receive them, O my father !  
 Call thy friends to the banquet feast ! Blest thou !  
 Most blest, through us who have wrought such splendid deeds.

CAD. Measureless grief ! Eye may not gaze on it,  
 The slaughter wrought by those most wretched hands.  
 Oh ! what a sacrifice before the gods !  
 All Thebes, and us, thou callest to the feast.  
 Justly—too justly, hath King Bromius  
 Destroyed us, fatal kindred to our house.

AGA. Oh ! how morose is man in his old age,  
 And sullen in his mien. Oh ! were my son  
 More like his mother, mighty in his hunting,  
 When he goes forth among the youth of Thebes  
 Wild beasts to chase ! But he is great alone,  
 In warring on the gods. We two, my sire,  
 Must counsel him against his evil wisdom.  
 Where is he ? Who will call him here before us  
 That he may see me in my happiness ?

CAD. Woe ! woe ! When ye have sense of what ye have  
 done,  
 With what deep sorrow, sorrow ye ! To th' end,



Oh! could ye be, only as now ye are,  
Nor happy were ye deemed, nor miserable.

AGA. What is not well? For sorrow what the cause?

CAD. First lift thine eyes up to the air around.

AGA. Behold! Why thus commandest me to gaze?

CAD. Is all the same? Appears there not a change?

AGA. 'Tis brighter, more translucent than before.

CAD. Is there the same elation in thy soul?

AGA. I know not what thou mean'st; but I become  
Conscious—my changing mind is settling down.

CAD. Canst thou attend, and plainly answer me?

AGA. I have forgotten, father, all I said.

CAD. Unto whose bed wert thou in wedlock given?

AGA. Echion's, him they call the Dragon-born.

CAD. Who was the son to thy husband thou didst bear?

AGA. Pentheus, in commerce 'twixt his sire and me.

CAD. And whose the head thou holdest in thy hands?

AGA. A lion's; thus my fellow-hunters said.

CAD. Look at it straight: to look on't is no toil.

AGA. What see I? Ha! what's this within my hands?

CAD. Look on't again, again: thou wilt know too well.

AGA. I see the direst woe that eye may see.

CAD. The semblance of a lion bears it now?

AGA. No: wretch, wretch that I am; 'tis Pentheus' head!

CAD. Even ere yet recognized thou might'st have mourned him.

AGA. Who murdered him? How came he in my hands?

CAD. Sad truth! Untimely dost thou ever come!

AGA. Speak; for my heart leaps with a boding throb.

CAD. 'Twas thou didst slay him, thou and thine own sisters.

AGA. Where died he? In his palace? In what place?

CAD. There where the dogs Actæon tore in pieces.

AGA. Why to Cithæron went the ill-fated man?

CAD. To mock the god, to mock the orgies there.

AGA. But how and wherefore had we thither gone?

CAD. In madness!—the whole city maddened with thee.

AGA. Dionysus hath destroyed us! Late I learn it.

CAD. Mocked with dread mockery; no god ye held him.

AGA. Father! Where's the dear body of my son?

CAD. I bear it here, not found without much toil.

AGA. Are all the limbs together, sound and whole?  
And Pentheus, shared he in my desperate fury?

CAD. Like thee he was, he worshipped not the god.  
All, therefore, are enwrapt in one dread doom.  
You, he, in whom hath perished all our house,  
And I who, childless of male offspring, see  
This single fruit—O miserable!—of thy womb  
Thus shamefully, thus lamentably dead—  
Thy son, to whom our house looked up, the stay  
Of all our palace he, my daughter's son,  
The awe of the whole city. None would dare  
Insult the old man when thy fearful face  
He saw, well knowing he would pay the penalty.  
Unhonoured now, I am driven from out mine home;  
Cadmus the great, who all the race of Thebes  
Sowed in the earth, and reaped that harvest fair.  
O best beloved of men, thou art now no more,  
Yet still art dearest of my children thou!  
No more, this grey beard fondling with thine hand,  
Wilt call me thine own grandsire, thou sweet child,  
And fold me round and say, "Who doth not honour thee?  
Old man, who troubles or afflicts thine heart?  
Tell me, that I may 'venge thy wrong, my father!"  
Now wretchedest of men am I. Thou pitiable—  
More pitiable thy mother—sad thy kin.  
O if there be who scorneth the great gods,  
Gaze on this death, and know that there are gods.

CHOR. Cadmus, I grieve for thee. Thy daughter's son  
Hath his just doom—just, but most piteous.

AGA. Father, thou seest how all is changed with me:  
*I am no more the Mænad dancing blithe,  
I am but the feeble, fond, and desolate mother.  
I know, I see—ah, knowledge best unknown!  
Sight best unseen!—I see, I know my son,  
Mine only son!—alas! no more my son.  
O beauteous limbs, that in my womb I bare!  
O head, that on my lap wast wont to sleep!  
O lips, that from my bosom's swelling fount  
Drained the delicious and soft-oozing milk!*

*O hands, whose first use was to fondle me !  
 O feet, that were so light to run to me !  
 O gracious form, that men wondering beheld !  
 O haughty brow, before which Thebes bowed down !  
 O majesty ! O strength ! by mine own hands—  
 By mine own murderous, sacrilegious hands—  
 Torn, rent asunder, scattered, cast abroad !  
 O thou hard god ! was there no other way  
 To visit us ? Oh ! if the son must die,  
 Must it be by the hand of his own mother ?  
 If the impious mother must atone her sin,  
 Must it be but by murdering her own son ?*

DIO. Now hear ye all, Thebes' founders, what is woven  
 By the dread shuttle of the unerring Fates.  
 Thou, Cadmus, father of this earth-born race,  
 A dragon shalt become ; thy wife shalt take  
 A brutish form, and sink into a serpent,  
 Harmonia, Ares' daughter, whom thou wedd'ist,  
 Though mortal, as Jove's oracle declares.  
 Thou in a car by heifers drawn shalt ride,  
 And with thy wife, at the Barbarians' head :  
 And many cities with their countless host  
 Shalt they destroy, but when they dare destroy  
 The shrine of Loxias, back shall they return  
 In shameful flight ; but Ares guards Harmonia  
 And thee, and bears you to the Isles of the Blest.

This say I, of no mortal father born,  
 Dionysus, son of Jove. Had ye but known  
 To have been pious when ye might, Jove's son  
 Had been your friend ; ye had been happy still.

AGA. Dionysus, we implore thee ! We have sinned !

DIO. Too late ye say so ; when ye should, ye would not.

AGA. That know we now ; but thou'rt extreme in vengeance.

DIO. Was I not outraged, being a god, by you ?

AGA. The gods should not be like to men in wrath.

DIO. This Jove, my father, long hath granted me.

AGA. Alas, old man ! Our exile is decreed.

DIO. Why then delay ye the inevitable ?

CAD. O child, to what a depth of woe we have fallen !

Most wretched thou, and all thy kin beloved !  
 I too to the Barbarians must depart,  
 An aged denizen. For there's a prophecy,  
 'Gainst Hellas a Barbaric mingled host  
 Harmonia leads, my wife, daughter of Ares.  
 A dragon I, with dragon nature fierce,  
 Shall lead the stranger spearmen 'gainst the altars  
 And tombs of Hellas, nor shall cease my woes—  
 Sad wretch !—not even when I have ferried o'er  
 Dark Acheron, shall I repose in peace.

AGA. Father ! to exile go I without thee ?

CAD. Why dost thou clasp me in thine arms, sad child,  
 A drone among the bees, a swan worn out ?

AGA. Where shall I go, an exile from my country ?

CAD. I know not, child ; thy sire is a feeble aid.

AGA. Farewell, mine home ! Farewell, my native Thebes !  
 My bridal chamber ! Banished, I go forth.

CAD. To the house of Aristæus go, my child.

AGA. I wait for thee, my father !

CAD. I for thee !

And for thy sisters.

AGA. Fearfully, fearfully, this deep disgrace,  
 Hath Dionysus brought upon our race.

DIO. Fearful on me the wrong that ye had done ;  
 Unhonoured was my name in Thebes alone.

AGA. Father, farewell !

CAD. Farewell, my wretched daughter !

AGA. So lead me forth—my sisters now to meet,  
 Sad fallen exiles.

Let me, let me go,

Where cursed Cithæron ne'er may see me more,  
 Nor I the cursed Cithæron see again.

Where there's no memory of the thyrsus dance.  
 The Bacchic orgies be the care of others.

# ION.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MERCURY.

ION.

CHORUS OF CREUSA'S FEMALE

ATTENDANTS.

CREUSA.

XUTHUS.

OLD MAN.

SERVANT OF CREUSA.

PYTHIAN PRIESTESS.

MINERVA.

SCENE—THE VESTIBULE OF APOLLO'S TEMPLE AT DELPHI.

### MERCURY.

By a celestial dame, was he who bears  
On brazen shoulders the incumbent load  
Of yonder starry heaven, where dwell the gods  
From ancient times, illustrious Atlas, sire  
To Maia, and from her I, Hermes, spring,  
The faithful messenger of mighty Jove.  
Now to this land of Delphi am I come,  
Where, seated on the centre of the world,  
His oracles Apollo to mankind  
Discloses, ever chaunting both events  
Present and those to come. Of no small note,  
In Greece, there is a city which derives  
Its name from Pallas, by her golden spear  
Distinguished. Phœbus in this realm compressed  
With amorous violence Erechtheus' daughter,  
Creusa, underneath those craggy rocks  
North of Minerva's citadel, the kings  
Of Athens call them Macra. She endured,  
Without the knowledge of her sire (for such  
Was the god's will, the burden of her womb :

But at the stated time, when in the palace  
She had brought forth a son, she to that cave,  
Where she th' embraces of the god hath known,  
Conveyed and left the child, to death exposed,  
Lodged in the hollow of an orbéd chest,  
Observant of the customs handed down  
By her progenitors, and Erichonius,  
That earth-born monarch of her native land,  
Whom Pallas, daughter of imperial Jove,  
Placing two watchful dragons for his guard,  
To the three damsels from Agrauros sprung  
Entrusted. Hence, among Erectheus' race,  
E'en from those times, an usage hath prevailed  
Of nurturing, 'midst serpents wrought in gold,  
Their tender progeny. Creusa left,  
Wrapt round her infant, whom she thus to death  
Abandoned, all the ornaments she had.  
Then this request, on my fraternal love  
Depending, Phœbus urged: "My brother, go  
To those blest children of their native soil,  
The famed Athenians (for full well thou know'st  
Minerva's city), from the hollow rock  
Taking this new-born infant, and the chest  
In which he lies, with fillets swathed around,  
Convey to my oracular abode,  
And place him in the entrance of my fane:  
What still is left undone my care shall add:  
For know he is my son." I, to confer  
A kindness on my brother Phœbus, bore  
The wicker chest away; and, having oped  
Its cover that the infant might be seen,  
Just at the threshold of this temple lodged.  
But when the fiery coursers of the sun  
Rushed from heaven's eastern gate in swift career,  
Entering the mansion whence the god deals forth  
His oracles, a priestess on the child  
Fixed her indignant eyes, and wondered much  
What shameless nymph of Delphi could presume  
By stealth to introduce her spurious brood

Into Apollo's house. She was inclined  
At first to cast him from the sacred threshold ;  
But, by compassion moved, the cruel deed  
Forbore, and, with paternal love, the god  
Aided the child, nor from his hallowed mansion  
Allowed him to be banished : him she took  
And nurtured, though she knew not from what mother  
He sprung, or that Apollo was his sire.  
To both his parents, too, the boy himself  
Remained a stranger. While he yet was young,  
Around the blazing altars, whence he fed,  
Playful he roamed ; but after he attained  
Maturer years, the Delphic citizens  
As guardian of the treasures of the god  
Employed, and found him faithful to his trust :  
Still in this fane he leads a holy life.  
Meanwhile Creusa, who the infant bore,  
Wedded to Xuthus : fortune this event  
Thus brought to pass ; a storm of war burst forth  
'Twixt the Athenian race and them who dwell  
In Chalcis, on Eubœa's stormy coast.  
In concert with the former having toiled,  
And joined in the destruction of their foes,  
A royal bride, Creusa, he obtained,  
Though not in Athens but Achaia born,  
The son of Æolus, who sprung from Jove.  
He and his consort have been childless long,  
And therefore to these oracles of Phœbus  
Are come in quest of issue. This event  
The god hath caused to happen, nor forgets  
His son, as some suppose ; for he, on Xuthus,  
Will, at his entering this prophetic dome,  
Freely bestow, and call the stripling his ;  
That when he comes to the maternal house,  
Creusa may acknowledge him she bore,  
While her amour with Phœbus rests concealed,  
And this her son obtains th' inheritance  
Of his maternal ancestors : through Greece  
Th' immortal father hath decreed his son

Shall be called Ion, the illustrious founder  
 Of Asiatic realms. But I must go  
 Among the laurel's shadowy groves, and learn  
 From this young prophet what the fates ordain ;  
 For I behold Apollo's son come forth,  
 To hang the branches of the verdant bay  
 Before the portals of the fane. Now first  
 Of all the gods I hail him by his name,  
 The name of Ion which he soon shall bear.

[*Exit* MERCURY.]

ION. Now the resplendent chariot of the sun  
 Shines o'er the earth : from its ethereal fires,  
 Beneath the veil of sacred night, the stars  
 Conceal themselves. Parnassus' cloven ridge,  
 Too steep for human footsteps to ascend,  
 Receives the lustre of its orient beams,  
 And through the world reflects them ; while the smoke  
 Of fragrant myrrh ascends Apollo's roof ;  
 The Delphic priestess on the holy tripod  
 Now takes her seat, and to the listening sons  
 Of Greece, those truths in mystic notes unfolds,  
 With which the gods inspire her labouring breast.  
 But, O ye Delphic ministers of Phœbus,  
 Now to Castalia's silver fount repair,  
 And when ye have performed the due ablutions,  
 Enter the temple ; let no word escape  
 Your lips of evil omen, mildly greet  
 Each votary, and expound the oracles  
 In your own native language. But the toils  
 Which I from childhood to the present hour  
 Have exercised, with laureate sprays and wreaths  
 Worn at our high solemnities, to cleanse  
 The vestibule of Phœbus, I repeat,  
 Sprinkling the pavement with these lustral drops,  
 And with my shafts will I repel the flocks  
 Of birds who taint the offerings of the god.  
 For like a friendless orphan, who ne'er knew  
 A mother's or a father's fostering care,  
 In Phœbus' shrine, which nurtured me, I serve.



ODE.

I.

In recent verdure ever gay,  
 Hail, O ye scions of the bay,  
     Which sweep Apollo's fane;  
 Cropt from the god's adjacent bowers,  
 Where rills bedew the vernal flowers,  
 And with perpetual streams refresh the plain;  
     The sacred myrtle here is found,  
 Whose branches o'er the consecrated ground  
     I wave, as day by day ascends  
         The sun with rapid wing,  
     Waking to toil which never ends,  
 And zealous in the service of my king.  
 O Pæan, Pæan, from Latona sprung,  
     Still mayst thou flourish blest and young!

II.

My labours with renown shall meet;  
 O Phœbus, the prophetic seat  
     Revering, at thy fane  
 A joyful minister I stand,  
 Serving with an officious hand  
 No mortal, but the blest immortal train.  
     Nor by these glorious toils opprest  
 Am I ignobly covetous of rest;  
     For dread Apollo is my sire;  
         To him, to him I owe  
     My being, nurtured in his choir,  
 And in the fostering god a father know.  
 O Pæan, Pæan, from Latona sprung,  
     Still mayst thou flourish blest and young!  
 But from this painful task will I desist,  
 And with the laurel cease to sweep the ground:  
 Next, from a golden vase, is it my office  
 To pour the waters of Castalia's fount,  
 Sprinkling its lustral drops: for I am free  
 From lust and its pollutions. May I serve

Apollo ever thus, or cease to serve him  
 When I some happier fortune shall attain !  
 But, ha ! the birds are here, and leave their nests  
 Upon Parnassus : wing not to this dome  
 Your flight, and on the gilded battlements  
 Forbear to perch. My arrows shall transpierce thee,  
 Herald of Jove, O thou, whose hookéd beak  
 Subdues the might of all the feathered tribes.  
 But lo ! another comes ! The swan his course  
 Steers to the altar. Wilt thou not retire  
 Hence with those purple feet ? Apollo's lyre,  
 In concert warbling with thy dulcet strains,  
 Shall not redeem thee from my bow : direct  
 Thy passage to the Delian lake—obey,  
 Or streaming blood shall interrupt thy song.  
 But what fresh bird approaches ? Would she build  
 Under these pinnacles a nest to hold  
 Her callow brood ? Soon shall the whizzing shaft  
 Repel thee. Wilt thou not comply ? Where Alpheus  
 Winds through the channeled rocks his passage, go,  
 And rear thy twittering progeny, or dwell  
 Amid the Isthmian groves, that Phœbus' gifts  
 And temples no defilement may receive.  
 For I am loth to take away your lives,  
 Ye wingéd messengers, who to mankind  
 Announce the will of the celestial powers.  
 But I on Phœbus must attend, performing  
 The task assigned me with unwearied zeal,  
 And minister to those who give me food.

CHORUS, ION.

CHOR. 'Tis not in Athens only that the fane  
 Where duteous homage to the gods is paid,  
 Or altar for Agyian Phœbus reared  
 With many a stately column is adorned ;  
 But in these mansions of Latona's son  
 From those twin deities portrayed there beams  
 An equal splendour on the dazzled sight.

1st SEMICHOR. See there Jove's son who with his  
 golden falchion

Slays the Lernaean Hydra ! O my friend,  
Observe him well.

2nd SEMICHOR. I do.

1st SEMICHOR. Another stands  
Beside him brandishing a kindled torch.

2nd SEMICHOR. He whose exploits I on my woof described ?

1st SEMICHOR. The noble Iolaus, who sustained  
Alcides' shield, and in those glorious toils  
Was the sole partner with the son of Jove.  
Him also mark who on a wingéd steed  
Is seated, how with forceful arm he smites  
The triple-formed Chimæra breathing fire.

2nd SEMICHOR. With thee these eyes retrace each varied  
scene.

1st SEMICHOR. Look at the giants' conflict with the gods  
Depicted on the wall.

2nd SEMICHOR. \* There, there, my friends.

1st SEMICHOR. Behold'st thou her who 'gainst Enceladus  
The dreadful Ægis brandishes ?

2nd SEMICHOR. I see  
Pallas, my goddess.

1st SEMICHOR. And the forkéd flames,  
With which th' impetuous thunderbolt descends,  
Hurled from the skies by Jove's unerring arm ?

2nd SEMICHOR. I see, I see ! Its livid flashes smite  
Mimas the foe, and with his pliant thyrsus  
Another earth-born monster Bacchus slays.

CHOR. On thee I call, O thou who in this fane  
Art stationed : is it lawful to advance  
Into the inmost sanctuary's recess  
With our feet bare ?

ION. This cannot be allowed,  
Ye foreign dames.

CHOR. \* Wilt thou not answer me ?

ION. What information wish ye to receive ?

CHOR. Say, is it true that Phœbus' temple stands  
On the world's centre ?

ION. 'Tis with garlands decked,  
And Gorgons are placed round it.

CHOR. So fame tells.

ION. If ye before these portals have with fire  
Consumed the salted cates, and wish to know  
Aught from Apollo, to this altar come ;  
But enter not the temple's dread recess  
Till sheep are sacrificed.

CHOR. I comprehend thee ;  
Nor will we break the god's established laws,  
But with the pictures which are here without  
Amuse our eyes.

ION. Ye may survey them all  
At leisure.

CHOR. Hither have our rulers sent us,  
The sanctuary of Phœbus to behold.

ION. Inform me to what household ye belong.

CHOR. Minerva's city is the place where dwell  
Our sovereigns. But lo ! she herself appears  
To whom the questions thou hast asked relate.

CREUSA, ION, CHORUS.

ION. Thy countenance, whoe'er thou be, O woman,  
Proves thou art noble, and of gentle manners :  
For by their looks we fail not to discern  
Those of exalted birth. But with amazement,  
Closing those eyes, thou strik'st me, and with tears  
Largely bedewing those ingenuous cheeks,  
Since thou hast seen Apollo's holy fane.  
Whence can such wayward grief arise ? The sight  
Of this auspicious sanctuary, which gives  
Delight to others, causes thee to weep.

CRE. Stranger, you well may wonder at my tears,  
For since I viewed these mansions of the god,  
I have been thinking of a past event ;  
And though myself indeed am here, my soul  
Remains at home. O ye unhappy dames !  
O most audacious outrages committed  
By the immortal gods ! To whom for justice  
Can we appeal, if, through the wrongs of those  
Who rule the world with a despotic power,  
We perish ?

ION.               What affliction unrevealed  
Makes thee despond ?

CRE.               None. I have dropped the subject.  
What follows I suppress, nor must you seek  
To learn aught farther.

ION.               But say, who thou art,  
Whence cam'st thou, in what region wert thou born,  
And by what name must we distinguish thee ?

CRE. Creusa is my name, my sire Erectheus,  
In Athens first I drew my vital breath.

ION. O thou in that famed city who resid'st,  
And by illustrious parents hast been nurtured,  
How much do I revere thee !

CRE.               I thus far.  
But in nought else, am blest.

ION.               I by the gods  
Conjure thee, answer, if the world speak truth.

CRE. What question's this you would propose. O stranger ?  
I wish to learn.

ION.               Sprung the progenitor  
Of thy great father from the teeming earth ?

CRE. Thence Ericthonius ; but my noble race  
Avails me not.

ION.               And did Minerva rear  
The warrior from the ground ?

CRE.               With virgin arms,  
For she was not his mother.

ION.               Of the child  
Disposing as in pictures 'tis described ?

CRE. To Cecrops' daughters him she gave for nurture,  
With strict injunctions never to behold him.

ION. I hear those virgins oped the wicker chest  
In which the goddess lodged him.

CRE.               Hence their doom  
Was death, and with their gore they stained the rock.

ION. Let that too pass. But is this rumour true,  
Or groundless ?

CRE.               What's your question ? for with leisure  
I am not overburdened.

ION. Did Erectheus,  
Thy royal father, sacrifice thy sisters ?

CRE. He feared not in his country's cause to slay  
Those virgins.

ION. By what means didst thou alone  
Of all thy sisters 'scape ?

CRE. A new-born infant,  
I still was in my mother's arms.

ION. Did earth  
Indeed expand her jaws, and swallow up  
Thy father ?

CRE. Neptune with his trident smote  
And slew him.

ION. Is the spot on which he died  
Called Macra ?

CRE. For what reason do you ask  
This question ? To my memory what a scene  
Have you recalled !

ION. Doth not the Pythian god  
Revere, and with his radiant beams adorn  
That blest abode ?

CRE. Revere ! But what have I  
To do with that ? Ah, would to heaven I ne'er  
Had seen the place !

ION. What then ! Dost thou abhor  
What Phœbus holds most dear ?

CRE. Not thus, O stranger ;  
Though I know somewhat base that has been done  
Under those caverns.

ION. What Athenian lord  
Received thy plighted hand ?

CRE. No citizen  
Of Athens ; but a sojourner, who came  
Out of another country.

ION. Who ? He sure  
Was of some noble lineage ?

CRE. Xuthus, son  
Of Æolus, who sprung from Jove.

ION. How gained  
This foreigner the hand of thee, a native ?

CRE. Eubœa is a region on the confines  
Of Athens.

ION. With the briny deep between,  
As fame relates.

CRE. Those bulwarks he laid waste,  
With Cecrops' race a comrade in the war.

ION. He thither came perhaps as an ally,  
And afterwards obtained thee for his bride.

CRE. In me the dower of battle, and the prize  
Of his victorious spear, did he receive.

ION. Alone, or with thy husband, art thou come  
These oracles to visit?

CRE. With my lord :  
But to Trophonius' cavern he is gone.

ION. As a spectator only, or t' explore  
The mystic will of Fate?

CRE. He hopes to gain  
From him and from Apollo one response.

ION. Seek ye the general fruit earth's bosom yields,  
Or children?

CRE. We are childless, though full long  
Have we been wedded.

ION. Hast thou never known  
The pregnant mother's throes? Art thou then barren?

CRE. Phœbus well knows I am without a son.

ION. O wretched woman, who in all beside  
Art prosperous : Fortune here, alas, deserts thee.

CRE. But who are you? How happy do I deem  
Your mother!

ION. An attendant on the god  
They call me ; and, O woman, such I am.

CRE. Sent from your city as a votive gift,  
Or by some master sold?

ION. I know this only,  
That I am called Apollo's.

CRE. In return,  
I too, O stranger, pity your hard fate.

ION. Because I know not either of my parents.

CRE. Beneath this fane or some more lowly dome  
Reside you?

ION.           This whole temple of the god  
Is my abode, here sleep I.

CRE.                               While an infant,  
Or since you were a stripling, came you hither?

ION. The persons who appear to know the truth  
Assert I was a child.

CRE.                               What Delphic nurse  
Performed a mother's office?

ION.                               I ne'er clung  
To any breast—she reared me.

CRE.                               Hapless youth,  
Who reared you? How have I discovered woes  
Which equal those I suffer!

ION.                               Phœbus' priestess,  
Whom as my real mother I esteem.

CRE. But how were you supported till you reached  
Maturer years?

ION.                               I at the altar fed,  
And on the bounty of each casual guest.

CRE. Whoe'er she was, your mother sure was wretched.

ION. Perhaps to me some woman owes her shame.

CRE. But say, what wealth you have? For you are drest  
In a becoming garb.

ION.                               I am adorned  
With these rich vestments by the god I serve.

CRE. Did you make no researches to discover  
Your parents?

ION.                               I have not the slightest clue  
To guide my steps.

CRE.                               Alas, another dame  
Like sufferings with your mother hath endured.

ION. Who? Tell me. Thy assistance wouldst thou give,  
I should rejoice indeed.

CRE.                               She for whose sake  
I hither came before my lord arrive.

ION. What are thy wishes in which I can serve thee?

CRE. I would obtain an oracle from Phœbus  
In private.

ION.                               Name it: for of all beside  
Will I take charge.



CRE. Now to my words attend—  
Yet shame restrains me.

ION. Then wilt thou do nothing :  
For Shame's a goddess not for action formed.

CRE. One of my friends informs me that by Phœbus  
She was embraced.

ION. A woman by Apollo !  
Use not such language, O thou foreign dame.

CRE. And that without the knowledge of her sire,  
She bore the god a son.

ION. This cannot be ;  
Her modesty forbids her to confess  
What mortal wronged her.

CRE. No ; she suffered ail  
That she complains of, though her tale be wretched.

ION. In what respect, if by the bonds of love  
She to the god was joined ?

CRE. The son she bore  
She also did cast forth.

ION. Where is the boy  
Who was cast forth, doth he behold the light ?

CRE. None knows ; and for this cause would I consult  
The oracle.

ION. But if he be no more,  
How died he ?

CRE. Much she fears the beasts devoured  
Her wretched child.

ION. What proof hath she of this ?

CRE. She came where she exposed, and found him  
not.

ION. Did any drops of blood distain the path ?

CRE. None, as she says ; although full long she searched  
Around the field.

ION. But since that hapless boy  
Perished, how long is it ?

CRE. Were he yet living,  
His age would be the same with yours.

ION. The god  
Hath wronged her, yet the mother must be wretched.

CRE. Since that hath she produced no other child.



But what the gods spontaneously confer  
Is beneficial.

CHOR. In a thousand forms,  
A thousand various woes o'erwhelm mankind :  
But life can scarce afford one happy scene.

CRE. Elsewhere as well as here art thou unjust  
To her, O Phœbus, who though absent speaks  
By me. For thou hast not preserved thy son  
Whom thou wert bound to save ; nor wilt thou answer  
His mother's questions, prophet as thou art :  
That, if he be no more, there may a tomb  
For him be heaped, or haply, if he live,  
She may at length behold her dearest child.  
But now no more of this, if me the god  
Forbid to ask what most I wish to know.  
Conceal, O gentle stranger (for I see  
My lord the noble Xuthus is at hand,  
Who from the cavern of Trophonius comes),  
What thou hast heard, lest I incur reproach  
For thus divulging secrets, and my words,  
Not as I spoke them, should be blazed abroad :  
For the condition of our sex is hard,  
Subject to man's caprice ; and virtuous dames,  
From being mingled with the bad, are hated.  
Such, such is woman's miserable doom.

XUTHUS, CREUSA, ION, CHORUS.

XUT. I to the god begin t' address myself :  
Him first I hail ; and you my consort next.  
Hath my long stay alarmed you ?

CRE. No, thou com'st  
To her who is oppress'd with anxious thoughts.  
Say from Trophonius what response thou bring'st ;  
Doth hope of issue wait us !

XUT. He refused  
T' anticipate the prophecies of Phœbus ;  
All that he said was this : nor I, nor thou,  
Shall from this temple to our home return  
Thus destitute of children.



Phœbus : what means he ? To the ravished maid  
 Unfaithful hath he proved : his son, by stealth  
 Begotten, left neglected to expire.  
 Act thou not thus ; but since thou art supreme  
 In majesty, let virtue too be thine.  
 For whosoever of the human race  
 Transgresses, with severity the gods  
 Punish his crimes : then how can it be just  
 For you, whose written laws mankind obey,  
 Yourselves to break them ? Though 'twill never be,  
 This supposition will I make, that thou,  
 Neptune, and Jove, who in the heaven bears rule,  
 Should make atonement to mankind for those  
 Whom ye have forcibly deflow'ed : your temples  
 Must ye exhaust to pay the fines imposed  
 On your base deeds : for when ye follow pleasure,  
 Heedless of decency, ye act amiss ;  
 No longer is it just to speak of men  
 As wicked, if the conduct of the gods  
 We imitate : our censures rather ought  
 To fall on those who such examples give. [Exit ION.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

O thou who aid'st the matron's throes,  
 Come Eilithya, for to thee I sue ;  
 Minerva next with honours due  
 I hail, who by Prometheus' aid arose  
 In arms refulgent from the front of Jove,  
 Nor knew a mother's fostering love ;  
 Victorious queen, armed with resistless might,  
 O'er Pythian fanes thy plumage spread,  
 Forsake awhile Olympus' golden bed,  
 O wing thy rapid flight  
 To this blest land where Phœbus reigns,  
 This centre of the world his chosen seat.  
 Where from his tripod in harmonious strains  
 Doth he th' unerring prophecy repeat :

With Latona's daughter join,  
 For thou like her art spotless and divine ;  
 Sisters of Phœbus, with persuasive grace,  
     Ye virgins sue, nor sue in vain,  
 That, from his oracles, Erechtheus' race  
 To the Athenian throne a noble heir may gain.

## II.

Object of Heaven's peculiar care  
 Is he whose children, vigorous from their birth,  
     Nursed on the foodful lap of earth,  
 Adorn his mansion and his transports share :  
 No patrimonial treasures can exceed  
     Theirs who by each heroic deed  
 Augment the fame of an illustrious sire,  
     And to their children's children leave  
 Th' invaluable heritage entire.

    In troubles we receive  
     From duteous sons a timely aid,  
 And social pleasure in our prosperous hours.  
 The daring youth, in brazen arms arrayed  
 Guards with protended lance his native towers.  
     To lure these eyes, though gold were spread,  
 Though Hymen wantoned on a regal bed,  
 Such virtuous offspring would my soul prefer.  
     The lonely childless life I hate,  
 And deem that they who choose it greatly err,  
 Blest with a teeming couch, I ask no kingly state.

## III.

Ye shadowy groves where sportive Pan is seen,  
 Stupendous rocks whose pine-clad summits wave,  
     Where oft near Macra's darksome cave,  
 Light spectres, o'er the consecrated green,  
     Agraulos' daughters lead the dance  
 Before the portals of Minerva's fane  
     To the shrill flute's varied strain.  
 When from thy caverns, through the vale around,  
     O Pan, the cheering notes resound.  
 Under those hanging cliffs (abhorred mischance !

Some nymph a son to Pææbus bore,  
 Whom she to ravenous birds a bloody feast  
 Exposed, and to each savage beast ;  
 Her shame, her conscious guilt, deplore.  
 Nor at my loom, nor by the voice of Fame  
 Have I e'er heard it said,  
 The base-born issue of some human maid,  
 Begotten by a god, to bliss have any claim.

ION, CHORUS.

ION. O ye attendants on your noble mistress,  
 Who watch around the basis of this fane,  
 Say, whether Xuthus have already left  
 The tripod and oracular recess,  
 Or in the temple doth he stay to ask  
 More questions yet about his childless state ?

CHOR. He is within, nor yet hath pas-sed the threshold  
 Of these abodes, O stranger : but we hear  
 The sounding hinges of yon gates announce  
 His coming forth : and see, my lord advances !

XUTHUS, ION, CHORUS.

XUT. On thee, my son, may every bliss attend .  
 For such an introduction suits my speech.

ION. With me all's well : but learn to think aught,  
 And we shall both be happy.

XUT. Give thy hand,  
 And suffer me t' embrace thee.

ION. Are your senses  
 Yet unimpaired, or hath the secret curse  
 Some god inflicts. O stranger, made you frantic ?

XUT. In my right mind am I, if having found  
 Him whom I hold most dear, I wish t' embrace him.

ION. Desist, nor touch me, lest your rude hand tear  
 The garlands of the god.

XUT. Now in these arms  
 Thee I have caught, no pledge will I receive ;  
 For I've discovered my belovéd son.

ION. Wilt thou not leave me, ere these shafts transpierce  
 Your vitæ ?

XUT. But why shun me, now thou know'st  
That I to thee by such strong ties am bound?

ION. Because to me it is no welcome office  
Foolish and frantic strangers to recall  
To their right reason.

XUT. Take my life away,  
And burn my corse; but if thou kill me, thou  
Wilt be thy father's murderer.

ION. How are you  
My father? Is not this ridiculous?

XUT. In a few words to thee would I explain  
Our near connection.

ION. What have you to say?

XUT. I am thy sire, and thou art my own son.

ION. Who told you this?

XUT. Apollo, by whose care  
Thou, O my son, wert nurtured in this fane.

ION. You for yourself bear witness.

XUT. Having searched  
The oracles of this unerring god—

ION. Some phrase of dubious import have you heard,  
Which hath misled you.

XUT. Heard I not aright?

ION. What said Apollo?

XUT. That the man who meets me—

ION. Where?

XUT. As I from the temple of the god  
Am going forth.

ION. What fortunes him await?

XUT. Those of my son.

ION. By birth or through adoption?

XUT. A gift and my own child.

ION. Am I the first  
You light on?

XUT. I have met none else, my son.

ION. Whence springs this strange vicissitude of fortune?

XUT. The same event with wonder strikes us both.

ION. To you, what mother bore me?

XUT. This I know not.



ION. Did not Apollo say?

XUT. I was delighted

With what he had revealed, and searched no farther.

ION. From mother earth I surely sprung.

XUT. The ground

Brings forth no children.

ION. How can I be yours?

XUT. I know not; but refer thee to the god.

ION. Some other subject let us now begin.

XUT. This is a topic, O my son, to me

Most interesting.

ION. The joys of lawless love

Have you experienced?

XUT. Yes, through youthful folly.

ION. Ere you were wedded to Erectheus' daughter?

XUT. Not ever since.

ION. Did you beget me then?

XUT. The time just tallies.

ION. But how came I hither?

XUT. This quite perplexes.

ION. From a distant land?

XUT. In this I also find new cause for doubt.

ION. Did you ascend erewhile the Pythian rock?

XUT. To celebrate the festivals of Bacchus.

ION. But to what host did you repair?

XUT. The same

Who me with Delphic maids—

ION. Initiated?

Or what is it you mean?

XUT. The Mænades

Of Bromius too.

ION. While sober, or o'erpowered

By wine?

XUT. The joys of Bacchus had ensnared me.

ION. Hence it appears I was begotten then.

XUT. Fate hath at length discovered thee, my son.

ION. But to this fane how could I come?

XUT. The nymph

Perhaps exposed thee.

ION. I from servitude  
Have made a blest escape.

XUT. Now, O my son,  
Embrace thy sire.

ION. I ought not to distrust  
The god.

XUT. Thou think'st aright.

ION. And is there aught  
That I can wish for more—

XUT. 'Thou now behold'st  
As much as it concerns thee to behold.

ION. Than from Jove's son to spring?

XUT. Which is thy lot.

ION. May I embrace the author of my birth?

XUT. To the god yielding credence.

ION. Hail, my father.

XUT. With ecstasy that title I receive.

ION. This day—

XUT. Hath made me happy.

ION. My dear mother,

Shall I e'er see thee? More than ever now  
(Be who thou wilt) I for that moment long.  
But thou perhaps art dead, and I for thee  
Can now do nothing.

CHOR. With our monarch's house  
We share the glad event: yet could I wish  
My royal mistress and Erectheus' race  
With children had been blest.

XUT. The god, my son,  
In thy discovery hath done well; to him  
I owe this happy union. Thou too find'st  
A father, though thou never knew'st till now  
By whom thou wert begotten: with thy wishes  
Mine, O my son, conspire, that thou mayst find  
Thy mother, and that I may learn who bore thee.  
By leaving this to time, we may at length  
Perhaps discover her: but now forsaking  
Apollo's temple and this exiled state,  
With dutcous zeal accompany thy sire

To Athens, where this heritage awaits thee,  
A prosperous sceptre and abundant wealth :  
Nor though thou want one parent, can the name,  
Or of ignoble, or of poor be thine :  
But for thy noble birth shalt thou be famed,  
And thy abundant treasures. Art thou silent ?  
Why dost thou fix thine eyes upon the ground ?  
Thy anxious thoughts return, and thou, thus changed  
From thy past cheerfulness, alarm'st my soul.

ION. Things at a distance wear not the same semblance  
As when on them we fix a closer view.  
I certainly with gratitude embrace  
My better fortunes, having found in you  
A father. But whence rose my anxious thoughts  
Now hear : in Athens, I am told, a native  
Is deemed a glorious name, not so the race  
Of aliens. I its gates shall enter laden  
With these two evils ; from a foreign sire  
Descended, and myself a spurious child.  
Branded with this reproach, doomed to continue  
In base obscurity, I shall be called  
A man of no account : but if intruding  
Into the highest stations in the city,  
I aim at being great, I shall incur  
Hate from the vulgar, for superior power  
Is to the people odious ; but the friends  
Of virtue, they whose elevated souls  
With real wisdom are endued, observe  
A modest silence, nor with eager haste  
Rush into public business ; such as these  
Will laugh and brand me with an idiot's name.  
For not remaining quiet in a land  
Which with tumultuous outrages abounds.  
Again, will those of a distinguished rank  
Who at the helm preside, when I attempt  
To raise myself to honours, be most wary  
How on an alien they their votes confer,  
For thus, my sire, 'tis ever wont to be ;  
They who possess authority and rank

Loathe their competitors. But when I come,  
Unwelcome stranger, to a foreign house  
And to the childless matron—partner once  
In your calamity, of all her hopes  
Now reft—with bitter anguish will she feel  
In private this misfortune : by what means  
Can I escape her hatred, at your footstool  
When I am seated, but she, still remaining  
A childless consort, with malignant eyes  
The object of your tenderness beholds ?  
Then or, betraying me, will you regard  
Your wife : or by th' esteem for me exprest,  
A dire confusion in your palace cause.  
For men, by female subtlety, how oft  
Have poisons been invented to destroy ;  
Yet is my pity to your consort due,  
Childless and hastening to the vale of years ;  
Sprung from heroic sires she ill deserves  
To pine through want of issue. But the face  
Of empire whom we foolishly commend  
Is fair indeed, though in her mansions Grief  
Hath fixed her loathed abode. For who is happy,  
Who fortunate, when his whole life is spent  
In circumspection and in anxious fears ?  
Rather would I in an ignoble state  
Live blest, than be a monarch who delights  
In evil friends, and hates the good, still fearing  
The stroke of death. Perhaps you will reply  
That gold can all these obstacles surmount,  
And to grow rich is sweet. I would not hear  
Tumultuous sounds, or grievous toils endure,  
Because these hands my treasures still retain.  
May I possess an humbler rank exempt  
From sorrow ! O my sire, let me describe  
The blessings I have here enjoyed ; first ease,  
To man most grateful ; by the busy crowd  
I seldom was molested, from my path  
No villain drove me : not to be endured  
Is this, when we to base competitors

Are forced to yield pre-eminence. I prayed  
Fervently to the gods, or ministered  
To mortals, and with those who did rejoice  
I never grieved. Some strangers I dismissed,  
But others came. Hence a new object still  
Did I remain, and each new votary please.  
What men are bound to wish for, even they  
Who with reluctance practise what they ought,  
The laws conspired to aid my natural bent,  
And in the sight of Phœbus made me just.  
These things maturely weighing in my breast,  
I deem my situation here exceeds  
What Athens can bestow. Allow me then  
The privilege of living to myself :  
For 'tis an equal blessing, or to taste  
The splendid gifts of fortune with delight,  
Or in an humbler station rest content.

CHOR. Well hast thou spoken : could thy words conduce  
To the felicity of those I love !

XUT. Cease to speak thus, and learn how to be happy :  
For on the spot where thee I found, my son,  
Will I perform due rites, the social board  
Crown with a public banquet, and slay victims  
In celebration of thy natal day,  
Which with no sacrifice hath yet been graced.  
But now conducting thee, as if a guest  
Entered my doors, thee with a splendid feast  
Will I regale, and to th' Athenian realm  
Lead thee as one who comes to view the land,  
Not as my son ; because I would not grieve  
My consort, who is childless, while myself  
In thee am blest : yet will I seize at length  
Some happy moment, and on her prevail  
To let thee wield my sceptre. By the name  
Of Ion, I accost thee, which best suits  
Th' event that happened, since, as I came forth  
From Phœbus' temple, thou didst meet me first.  
Collecting therefore all thy band of friends,  
Previous to thy departure from the city



That lord in whom her hopes were placed?  
 But he is happy now, while she descends  
 Through misery to the vale of years in haste:  
 Disdained by all his virtuous friends  
 Shall Xuthus droop, through fortune's power,  
 To our rich mansions, who a stranger came,  
 Nor duly prized her gift, the royal dower:  
 Perish the traitor to our honoured dame!  
 Ne'er may his incense to the gods ascend!  
 Creusa shall know this. I am our sovereign's friend.

## III.

With his new son th' exulting sire  
 Already to the festive banquet hies,  
 Where steep Parnassus' hills aspire,  
 Whose rocky summits touch the skies,  
 Where Bacchus lifts a blazing pine,  
 And the gay Mænades to join  
 His midnight dances haste. With footsteps rude  
 Ne'er may this boy intrude  
 Into my city: rather may he die,  
 And quit life's radiant morn:  
 For groaning Athens would with scorn  
 And jealous eyes the alien view,  
 Should Xuthus' fraud such cause for scorn supply.  
 Enough for her that o'er her plain  
 Erst did Erechtheus stretch a wide domain,  
 Still be each patriot to his children true.

## CREUSA, OLD MAN, CHORUS.

CRE. Thou venerable man, who didst attend  
 Erechtheus the deceased, my honoured sire,  
 Now mount the god's oracular abode,  
 That thou my joys, if Phœbus, mighty king,  
 The birth of children shall foretell, mayst share  
 For surely to be happy with our friends  
 Is most delightful: but (which Heaven forbid!)  
 Should any evil happen, to behold  
 The face of a benignant man is sweet.

For though I am thy queen, as thou didst erst  
Honour my father, in that father's stead  
I reverence those grey hairs.

OLD MAN.                    You still retain  
A courtesy of manners, which, O daughter,  
Suits your illustrious lineage : you belie not  
Those first great ancestors from whom you spring,  
Sons of the teeming earth. O lead me, guide  
To the prophetic mansion, for to me  
Th' ascent is steep : but let thy needful aid  
Support me while with aged steps I move.

CRE. Follow me now, look where thou tread'st.

OLD MAN.                                       These feet  
Indeed are tardy, but my zeal is swift.

CRE. Lean on thy staff, while up the winding path  
Thou striv'st to climb.

OLD MAN.                    'Tis darkness all, my eyesight  
So fails me.

CRE.                    Thou speak'st truth, but let not this  
Make thee dejected.

OLD MAN.                    Not with my consent  
Thus do I suffer ; but on me, though loth,  
What Heaven inflicts have I no power to heal.

CRE. Ye faithful females, who have served me long,  
Attending at the distaff or the loom,  
What fortunes to my husband were revealed ?  
Left he the temple with a blest assurance  
Of children, whom t' obtain we hither came ?  
Inform me : for with acceptable tidings  
If ye can greet me, ye will not confer  
Such favour on a mistress who distrusts  
The truth of what ye utter.

CHOR.                    Rutless fate !

CRE. This prelude to your speech is inauspicious.

CHOR. Ah, wretched me ! But wherefore am I wounded  
By oracles that to my lords belong ?  
No more ! Why should I venture to relate  
A tale for which my recompense is death ?

CRE. What means this plaint, and whence arise your  
fears ?



CHOR. Shail we speak out, shall we observe strict silence,  
Or how shall we proceed?

CRE. Tell what you know  
Of the misfortune which invades your queen.

CHOR. Yes, thou shouldst hear it all, though twofold death  
Awaited me. Ne'er shall those arms sustain,  
Nor to thy bosom shalt thou ever clasp,  
The wished-for progeny.

OLD MAN. Alas, my daughter,  
Would I were dead!

CRE. Wretch that I am! The woes  
Ye have revealed, my friends, make life a curse.

OLD MAN. We perish, O my daughter!

CRE. Grief, alas!  
Pierces my vitals.

OLD MAN. Those untimely groans  
Suppress.

CRE. My complaints unbidden force their way.

OLD MAN. Before we learn—

CRE. Alas, what farther tidings  
Can I expect?

OLD MAN. Whether our lord endure  
The same, and share your woes, or you alone  
To adverse fortune are exposed.

CHOR. On him,  
Thou aged man, Apollo hath bestowed  
A son; this blessing singly he enjoys  
Without his consort.

CRE. You to me unfold  
The greatest of all evils, an affliction  
Which claims my groans.

OLD MAN. But is the son you speak of  
To spring hereafter from some dame unknown,  
Or did Apollo's oracle declare  
That he is born already?

CHOR. To thy lord  
Phœbus an offspring gives, already born,  
Who hath attained the age of blooming manhood:  
For I was present.

CRE. What is this you say?



Through hatred to your husband, but because  
I love you more than him, who wedding you  
When to the city he a stranger came,  
Your palace too and whole inheritance  
With you receiving, on some other dame  
Appears to have begotten sons by stealth :  
How 'twas by stealth I'll prove ; when he perceived  
That you were barren, he was not content  
To share the self-same fate, but on a slave,  
Whom he embraced in secrecy, begot  
And to some Delphic matron gave this son.  
That in a foreign realm he might be nurtured :  
He, to the temple of Apollo sent,  
Is here trained up in secret. But the sire,  
Soon as he knew the stripling had attained  
The years of manhood, hath on you prevailed  
Hither to come, because you had no child.  
The god indeed hath spoken truth ; not so  
Xuthus, who from his infancy hath reared  
The boy, and forged these tales ; that, if detected,  
His crimes might be imputed to the god :  
But coming hither, and by length of time  
Hoping to screen the fraud, he now resolves  
He will transfer the sceptre to this stripling,  
For whom at length he forges the new name  
Of Ion, to denote that he went forth  
And met him. Ah, how do I ever hate  
Those wicked men who plot unrighteous deeds,  
And then adorn them with delusive art !  
Rather would I possess a virtuous friend  
Of mean abilities, than one more wise  
And profligate. Of all disastrous fates  
Yours is the worst, who to your house admit  
Its future lord, whose mother is unknown,  
A youth selected from th' ignoble crowd,  
The base-born issue of some female slave.  
For this had only been a single ill  
Had he persuaded you, since you are childless,  
T' adopt, and in your palace lodged the son

Of some illustrious dame : but if to you  
 This scheme had been disgustful, from the kindred  
 Of Æolus his sire should he have sought  
 Another consort. Hence is it incumbent  
 On you to execute some great revenge  
 Worthy of woman : with the lifted sword,  
 Or by some stratagem or deadly poison,  
 Your husband and his offspring to dispatch  
 Ere you by them are murdered : you will lose  
 Your life if you delay, for when two foes  
 Meet in one house some mischief must befall,  
 Or this or that. I therefore will with you  
 Partake the danger, and with you conspire  
 To slay that stripling, entering the abode  
 Where for the sumptuous banquet he is making  
 Th' accustomed preparation. While I view  
 The sun, and e'en in death, will I repay  
 The bounty of those lords who nurtured me.  
 For there is one thing only which confers  
 Disgrace on slaves—the name ; in all beside  
 No virtuous slave to freeborn spirits yields.

CHOR. I too, O my dear mistress, am resolved  
 To be the steadfast partner of your fate,  
 And die with glory, or with glory live.

CRE. How, O my tortured soul, shall I be silent?  
 But rather how these hidden loves disclose?  
 Shall I shake off all shame? for what retards  
 My farther progress? To how dire a struggle  
 Doth my beleaguered virtue lie exposed?  
 Hath not my lord betrayed me? For of house  
 And children too am I deprived. All hopes  
 Are vanished now of which I fondly sought  
 T' avail myself, but could not, by concealing  
 The loss of my virginity, those throes  
 Concealing which I ever must bewail.  
 But by the starry throne of Jove, the goddess  
 Who haunts my rocks, and by the sacred banks  
 Of Triton's lake, whose waters never fail,  
 I my disgrace no longer will suppress,  
 For, having cleansed my soul from that pollution

I shall have shaken off a load of cares.  
My eyes drop tears, and sorrow rends my soul—  
Assailed with treachery both by men and gods,  
Whom I will prove to have been false, devoid  
Of gratitude to those they loved. O thou,  
Whose skilful hand attunes the sevenfold chords  
Of the melodious lyre, from lifeless shells  
Eliciting the Muses' sweetest strains,  
Son of Latona, I this day will publish  
A tale to thee disgraceful : for thou cam'st,  
Thou cam'st resplendent with thy golden hair,  
As I the crocus gathered, in my robe  
Each vivid flower assembling to compose  
Garlands of fragrance : thou my snowy wrist  
Didst seize and drag me to the cave, with shrieks  
While to my mother for her aid I cried :  
'Twas impudently done, thou lustful god,  
To gain the favour of the Cyprian queen.  
In evil hour, to thee I bore a son,  
Whom, fearful of my mother's wrath, I cast  
Into that cave, where thou with wretched me  
Didst join thyself in luckless love. Alas !  
Now is our miserable son no more,  
On him have vultures feasted. But meanwhile  
Thy festive Pæans to the sounding harp  
Dost thou repeat. O offspring of Latona,  
To thee I speak, who from thy golden tripod  
Dost in this centre of the world dispense  
Thy oracles. My voice shall reach thy ears,  
O thou false paramour, who, from my lord  
Though thou no favours ever didst receive,  
A son into his mansions hast conveyed :  
Meanwhile the offspring whom to thee I bore  
Hath died unnoticed, by the vultures torn ;  
Lost are the bandages in which his mother  
Had wrapped him. Thee thy Delos doth abhor,  
The branches of whose laurel rise to meet  
The palm, and form that shade, where thee her son  
With arms divine Latona first embraced.

CHOR. Ah me ! How inexhaustible a source

Of woes is opened, such as must draw tears  
From every eye.

OLD MAN. O daughter, on your face,  
Still with unsated rapture do I gaze,  
My reason have I lost : for, while I strive  
From my o'erburdened spirit to discharge  
The waves of woe, fresh torrents at the poop  
Rush in and overwhelm me, since the words  
Which you have uttered, from your present ills  
Digressing to the melancholy track  
Of other sufferings. What is it you say ?  
What charge would you allege against Apollo ?  
What son is this whom you assert you bore ?  
And in what quarter of your native city  
To beasts did you expose him for a prey ?  
To me repeat the tale.

CRE. Thou aged man,  
Thy presence makes me blush : yet will I speak.

OLD MAN. Full well do I know how to sympathize  
With my afflicted friends.

CRE. Then hear my tale.  
Thou must remember, on the northern side  
Of the Cecropian rock, the cave called Macra.

OLD MAN. I know it ; on that spot Pan's temple stands,  
And near it blaze his altars.

CRE. 'Twas the scene  
Of my unhappy conflict.

OLD MAN. Say, what conflict ?  
Your history makes me weep.

CRE. The amorous god  
Apollo held me in a forced embrace.

OLD MAN. Was this, my daughter, then, what I perceived ?

CRE. I know not ; but will openly declare  
The truth, if thy conjectures light on it.

OLD MAN. When you in silence wailed some hidden woe ?

CRE. Those evils happened then which I to thee  
Without disguise reveal.

OLD MAN. But by what means  
Your union with Apollo did you hide ?

CRE. I bore a son—with patience hear me speak,  
O venerable man.

OLD MAN. Where? Who performed  
Th' obstetric part? Did you alone endure  
The grievous throes of childbirth?

CRE. All alone  
Within that cave where I my honour lost.

OLD MAN. But where's the boy, that in this childless state  
Thou mayst remain no longer?

CRE. He is dead,  
Old man; to beasts was he exposed.

OLD MAN. How! Dead!  
Was Phœbus then so base as not to aid you?

CRE. No aid he gave: but in the dreary house  
Of Pluto is our hapless offspring nurtured.

OLD MAN. But who exposed him? Sure it was not you?

CRE. I in the midnight gloom around him wrapped  
A mantle.

OLD MAN. To th' exposure of your son  
Was no man privy?

CRE. I had no accomplice  
But secrecy with evil fortune leagued.

OLD MAN. And how could you endure to leave the child  
Within that cavern?

CRE. How? These lips did utter  
Full many piteous words.

OLD MAN. The cruelty  
Which you here showed was dreadful: but the god  
Than you was still more cruel.

CRE. Had you seen  
The child stretch forth his suppliant hands to me—

OLD MAN. Sought he the fostering breast, or to recline  
In your maternal arms?

CRE. Hence torn he suffered  
From me foul wrong.

OLD MAN. But whence could such a thought  
Enter your soul as to expose your son?

CRE. Because I hoped Apollo, who begot,  
Would save him.

OLD MAN. Ah, what storms have overwhelmed  
The fortunes of your house !

CRE. Why, covering up  
Thy head, thus weep'st thou, O thou aged man ?

OLD MAN. Because I see you and your father wretched.

CRE. Such is the doom of frail mortality :  
Nought rests in the same state.

OLD MAN. But let us dwell  
No more, O daughter, on the piteous theme.

CRE. What must I do ? The wretched can devise  
No wholesome counsel.

OLD MAN. On the god who wronged you  
First wreak your vengeance.

CRE. How can I a mortal  
O'ercome the potent deities ?

OLD MAN. Set fire  
To Phœbus' awful temple.

CRE. Fear restrains me,  
And I endure sufficient woes already.

OLD MAN. Dare then to do what's feasible, to kill  
Your husband.

CRE. I revere the nuptial bed,  
For when I first espoused the noble Xuthus,  
My lord was virtuous.

OLD MAN. Slay at least this boy,  
Who is produced your interest to oppose.

CRE. Ah, by what means ? How greatly should I wish  
This done, if it were possible.

OLD MAN. By arming  
With swords your followers.

CRE. I will go : but where  
Shall this be executed ?

OLD MAN. In the tent  
Where with a banquet he regales his friends.

CRE. This were a public outrage, and my band  
Of followers is but weak.

OLD MAN. Alas ! your courage  
Deserts you : forge yourself some better scheme.

CRE. I too have schemes both subtle and effective.



OLD MAN. In both will I assist you.

CRE. Hear me then :

Full well thou know'st the history of that war  
Waged by earth's brood.

OLD MAN. Against the gods I know  
The giants fought on the Phlegrean plain.

CRE. There earth produced the Gorgon, dreadful monster.

OLD MAN. To aid her sons in battle, and contend  
With the immortal powers.

CRE. E'en so, and Pallas,  
Daughter of Jove, the virgin goddess, slew  
This prodigy.

OLD MAN. But by what horrid form  
Was it distinguished ?

CRE. Hissing serpents twined  
Around its chest.

OLD MAN. Is this the tale I heard  
In days of yore ?

CRE. That Pallas wears its hide  
To guard her bosom.

OLD MAN. Which they call the Ægis,  
The garment of Minerva.

CRE. It obtained  
This name, amidst the combat of the gods  
When she advanced.

OLD MAN. But how can this, O daughter,  
Destroy your foes ?

CRE. Old man, art thou acquainted  
With Ericthonius, or an utter stranger  
To his whole history ?

OLD MAN. Him whom earth brought forth,  
The founder of your race.

CRE. Minerva gave  
To him when newly born—

OLD MAN. Gave what ? You speak  
With hesitation.

CRE. Of the Gorgon's blood  
Two drops.

OLD MAN. On mortals what effect have these ?

CRE. The one produces death, the other heals  
Each malady.

OLD MAN. In what were they contained?  
Did Pallas to the body of the child  
Affix them?

CRE. To his golden bandages:  
He gave them to my sire.

OLD MAN. But when he died,  
Did they devolve to you?

CRE. To me they came,  
And them e'en now around my wrists I wear.

OLD MAN. But of what wondrous qualities, O say,  
Consists this twofold present of the goddess?

CRE. That blood which issued from the monster's vein.

OLD MAN. What is the use of this? and with what virtues  
Is it endued?

CRE. Diseases it repels,  
And nourishes man's life.

OLD MAN. But what effect  
Arises from the second drop you speak of?

CRE. Inevitable death: for 'tis the venom  
Of serpents which around the Gorgon twine.

OLD MAN. These drops together mingled, do you bring,  
Or separate?

CRE. Separate. For with evil good  
Ought not to be confounded.

OLD MAN. You possess,  
My dearest daughter, all that you can need.

CRE. By this the boy must die: but to dispatch him  
Shall be your office.

OLD MAN. Where and by what means  
Can I dispatch him? It is yours to speak,  
But mine to execute.

CRE. When at my house  
In Athens he arrives.

OLD MAN. In this you speak  
Unwisely; for you treat with scorn my counsels.

CRE. What mean'st thou? Hast thou formed the same sus-  
Which have just entered my misgiving soul? [picious

OLD MAN. Although this boy you slay not, you will see,  
To have contrived his death.

CRE. 'Tis well observed :  
For every tongue asserts that stepdames envy  
Their husband's children.

OLD MAN. Kill him, therefore, here ;  
You then will be enabled to deny  
That by your means he perished.

CRE. Ere it comes,  
I that blest hour anticipate.

OLD MAN. Your husband  
Will you deceive e'en in that very point  
In which he strives t' o'erreach you.

CRE. Know'st thou then  
How to proceed ? This ancient golden vase  
Wrought by Minerva, at my hand receiving,  
Go where my lord in secret offers up  
His victims ; when the banquet is concluded,  
And they prepare to pour forth to the gods  
The rich libation, by thy robe concealed  
Infuse into the goblet of the youth  
Its venomous contents ; for him alone,  
Who in my house hereafter hopes to reign,  
A separate draught, but not designed for all.  
Should he once swallow this, he ne'er will reach  
The famed Athenian gates, but here remain  
A breathless corse.

OLD MAN. This mansion, for the purpose  
Of public hospitality designed,  
Now enter : I meanwhile will execute  
The business I'm employed in. Aged feet  
Grow young again by action, though past time  
Can ne'er be measured back. Attend, my queen !  
Bear me to him I hate, aid me to slay  
And drag him forth from the polluted temple !  
For in their prosperous fortunes men are bound  
To be religious ; but no law obstructs  
His progress who resolves to smite his foes.

[*Exeunt CREUSA and OLD MAN.*]

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

O Trivia, Ceres' daughter, who presid'st  
 O'er the nocturnal passenger,  
 And him by day who travels; if thou guid'st  
 Th' envenomed cup, it shall not err  
 Before it reach the destined lip  
 Of him to whom my venerable queen  
 Sends the Gorgon's blood to sip,  
 Who treacherously intruding would debase  
 Her ancestors' imperial race.  
 No alien's brood in Athens shall be seen;  
 The city where Erectheus filled the throne  
 Shall still be ruled by his posterity alone.

## I. 2.

But if in vain to slay the foe she tries,  
 Should fortune too desert my queen,  
 And hope which now promotes the bold emprise;  
 The biting falchion's edge I ween,  
 Or, twined around her neck, the noose,  
 Will finish these accumulated woes.  
 Then the flitting spirit, loose  
 From earthly gyves, in other forms shall live.  
 For she will never tamely give  
 Consent, that he, to foreign realms who owes  
 His birth, shall seize the palace of her sires:  
 Hence from her vivid eyes thick flash indignant fires.

## II. 1.

Shame for that injured god I feel  
 To whom the muse awakes her varied strain,  
 Intruding with officious zeal,  
 Around Callichore's famed spring,  
 On the moon's twentieth eve, should he profane  
 The kindled torches, and his tribute bring,  
 A sleepless votary, mingling with his train,

When in the dance the starry sky  
 Of Jove, with the resplendent moon, unites,  
 And fifty maids, the progeny  
 Of Nereus, sport midst ocean's rapid tide,  
 Or where exhaustless rivers glide,  
 To Proserpine and Ceres' mystic rites  
 Yielding due homage: from the Delphic fane,  
 Yet there this vagrant hopes to reign,  
 And satiate his rapacious soul's desire  
 With wealth, which others' toils acquire.

## II. 2.

Ye bards who crowd each hostile page  
 With tales of wives beguiled by lawless love,  
 And war with feeble woman wage,  
 View with impartial eye our deeds,  
 And listen for a moment while I prove  
 How greatly female chastity exceeds  
 Man, whom unbridled passions prompt to rove.  
 Oft have rude songs profaned our name,  
 Now let the muse man's haughty sex assail,  
 And publish deeds replete with shame.  
 For he who from Jove's sons derives his birth  
 Is void of gratitude and worth,  
 Nought could the throne his consort gave avail  
 To make the nuptial bed his scene of joy:  
 He hath obtained this spurious boy,  
 By the seducing wiles of Venus led  
 To some ignoble damsel's bed.

## SERVANT, CHORUS.

SER. Where, O ye noble matrons, shall I find  
 My queen, Erectheus' daughter? For in quest  
 Of her through the whole city have I ranged,  
 But cannot meet with her.

CHOR. O thou who tend'st  
 On the same lords with me, what fresh event  
 Hath happened—wherefore mov'st thou with such speed?  
 And what important tidings dost thou bring?

SER. We are pursued : the rulers of this land  
Search after her, resolved that she shall die,  
Thrown headlong from the rock.

CHOR. Ah me ! what sayst thou ?  
Could we not then conceal our scheme of slaying  
The boy ?

SER. We are detected, and her danger  
Is now most imminent.

CHOR. But by what means  
Were these our hidden stratagems brought forth  
To public view ?

SER. The god hath found injustice  
Too weak to cope with justice, nor allows  
His shrine to be polluted.

CHOR. I entreat thee  
Say how this happened : for when we have heard  
Whether our doom be death, we shall die gladly,  
Or, if we live, with pleasure view the sun.

SER. When from the god's oracular abode  
With his new son Creusa's husband went  
To hold a feast, and for th' immortal powers  
Prepared oblations, Xuthus sought the hill  
Whence Bacchus' flames burst forth, that he might sprinkle  
Parnassus' cloven summit with the blood  
Of slaughtered victims, celebrating thus  
The blest discovery of his long-lost son,  
Whom thus the sire accosted : " Here remain,  
And bid the builders labour to erect  
Such tent as shall enclose an ample space  
On every side : but when I to those gods  
Who bless the natal hour have sacrificed,  
If I stay long, before thy friends who here  
Are present, place the genial feast." Then taking  
The heifers, he departed. But the youth,  
Attentive to his pious task, on columns  
Erected the light roof, to which no walls  
Lent their support ; he guarded it with care,  
Both from the flaming sun's meridian rays,  
And from the western aspect ; then the sides

An acre each in length did he extend,  
 With equal angles : in the central space  
 Was there an area, each of the four sides  
 Its length extended to six hundred feet,  
 A perfect square, which skilful artists say  
 Was calculated well to entertain  
 All Delphi at the feast ; the sacred tapestry  
 Then taking from the treasures of the god,  
 He covered o'er the whole—a wondrous sight  
 To all beholders. First he o'er the roof  
 Threw robes, which Hercules, the son of Jove,  
 To Phœbus at his temple brought, the spoils  
 Of vanquished Amazons, a votive gift,  
 On which these pictures by the loom were wrought  
 Heaven, in its vast circumference all the stars  
 Assembling ; there his coursers, too, the sun  
 Impetuous drove, till ceased his waning flame,  
 And with him drew in his resplendent train  
 Vesper's clear light : but, clad in sable garb,  
 Night hastened onward, with her chariot drawn  
 By steeds unyoked ; the stars accompanied  
 Their goddess ; through mid-air the Pleiades,  
 And, with his falchion, armed Orion moved ;  
 But placed on high, around the Northern Pole,  
 The Bear, in an averted posture, turned ;  
 Then full-orbed Cynthia, who the months divides,  
 Darted her splendour from the realms above ;  
 Next came the Hyades, a sign well known  
 To sailors, and Aurora's dawning light,  
 The stars dispelling. But the sides he covered  
 With yet more tapestry : the Barbaric fleet  
 To that of Greece opposed was there displayed :  
 Followed a monstrous brood, half horse, half man,  
 The Thracian monarch's furious steeds subdued,  
 And lion of Nemæa ; at the gate  
 Close to his daughters Cecrops rolled along  
 On scaly folds ; this was a votive gift  
 From some Athenian citizen unknown,  
 He in the centre of the festive board

Placed golden cups. An aged herald went  
On tiptoe, and each citizen of Delphi  
Invited to attend the sumptuous feast.  
They, crowned with garlands, when the tent was filled,  
Indulged their genius. After the delight  
Of the repast was o'er, an aged man,  
Into the midst advancing, took his stand,  
And from the guests by his officious zeal  
Provoked abundant laughter : from huge urns  
He poured the water forth to lave their hands,  
And scattered all around from blazing myrrh  
A rich perfume, over the golden cups  
Presiding, and assuming to himself  
That office. But at length, when the shrill pipe  
Uttered its notes harmonious, and the wine  
Again went round, the jovial veteran cried :  
“ These smaller cups remove, and in their stead  
Large goblets bring, that all may cheer their souls  
More expeditiously.” Then toiled the servants  
Beneath the silver vessels which they bore,  
And golden beakers by the sculptor wrought :  
But he, selecting one of choicest mould,  
As if he only meant to show respect  
To his young lord, presented it filled high  
Up to the brim, infusing midst the wine  
A deadly poison, which 'tis said his queen  
Gave him, that the new offspring of her lord  
Might perish, but without its being known  
To any man what caused the stripling's death.  
While he, whom Xuthus has declared his son,  
Surrounded by his comrades, in his hands  
Held the libation, some reproachful word  
Was uttered by a servant, which the youth,  
Who had received his nurture in the fane  
And mid-t experienced prophets, thought an omen  
Most unpropitious, and another goblet  
Commanded to be filled : but, on the ground,  
As a libation to the Delphic god,  
Poured forth the first, and bade his comrades follow



Th' example which he gave. A general silence  
Succeeded : we the holy goblets filled  
With water and with Bibbian wine. While thus  
We were employed, there flew into the tent  
A flock of doves (for they beneath the roof  
Of Phœbus dwell secure) ; but of the wine  
When they had tasted, after they had dipped  
Their beaks, which thirsted for the luscious draught,  
And the rich beverage down their feathered throats  
Quaffed eagerly, innoxious did it prove  
To all beside, but she, who on the spot  
Had settled where the new-discovered stripling  
Poured his libation down, no sooner tasted  
The liquor, than she shook her wings, cried out  
With a shrill plaintive voice, and, groaning, uttered  
Notes unintelligible. Every guest  
The struggles of the dove amazed ; she died  
Torn with convulsions, and her purple feet  
Now loosed their hold. But at the social board,  
He whom the oracle declared the son  
Of Xuthus, rent his garments, bared his breast,  
And cried, " What miscreant strove to slay me. Speak,  
Old man, for this officious zeal was thine,  
And from thy hand the goblet I received."  
Then with impetuous grasp his aged arm  
He caught, and questioned him, that in the fact  
Of bearing venomed drugs he might detect him.  
Hence was the truth laid open : through constraint,  
At length did he reluctantly declare  
Creusa's guilt, and how her heart contrived  
The scheme of minist'ring th' envenomed draught.  
Forth from the banquet with his comrades rushed  
The youth, whom Phœbus' oracles pronounced  
To be the son of Xuthus. Standing up  
Among the Pythian nobles, thus he spoke :  
" O sacred land, the daughter of Erectheus,  
A foreign dame, would take away my life  
By poison." Delphi's rulers have decreed  
My queen shall be thrown headlong from the rock,

Nor hath one single voice, but the consent  
 Of all, adjudged her death, because she strove,  
 E'en in the temple, to have slain the priest.  
 Pursued by the whole city, hither bend  
 Her inauspicious steps. She through a wish  
 For children to Apollo came : but now  
 She perishes with all her hoped-for race. [*Exit SERVANT.*]

CHOR. No means are left for wretched me  
 The ruthless hand of death to 'scape ;  
 For all too plainly see,  
 Mixt with the purple juices of the grape,  
 The baleful drops of viper's blood :  
 'Tis manifest what victims were designed  
 To cross the dreary Stygian flood.  
 My life is doomed to close in woe,  
 At me huge rocky fragments will they throw  
 How, O my royal mistress, shall I find  
 Pinions to speed my rapid flight ?  
 How shall I penetrate earth's inmost womb,  
 And in the realms of night  
 Avoid this miserable doom ;  
 Avoid the stones which vengeance hurls around,  
 When at our heads she aims the wound ?  
 Shall I the fleetest steed ascend,  
 Or the tall prow which cleaves the billowy main ?  
 No heart can hide so foul a stain,  
 Unless some god his sheltering aid extend.  
 How sorely, O my wretched queen,  
 Will thy tortured spirit grieve !  
 And shall not we, who have been seen  
 Striving to work another's bane,  
 The woes we would inflict, receive,  
 As justice doth ordain ?

CREUSA, CHORUS.

CRE. My faithful followers, they pursue my flight,  
 Resolved to slay me ; by the public vote  
 Of all the Pythian citizens condemned,  
 I shall be yielded up.

CHOR. We are no strangers  
To thy calamities; mayst thou escape,  
Favoured by fortune!

CRE. Whither shall I fly?  
These feet were hardly swift enough t' outstrip,  
Impending death: but from my foes escaped,  
By stealth I come.

CHOR. What shelter canst thou need  
More than these altars furnish?

CRE. How can they  
Avail me?

CHOR. 'Tis unlawful to destroy  
The suppliant.

CRE. But the law hath sentenced me  
To perish.

CHOR. Hadst thou by their hands been caught,

CRE. But the relentless ministers of vengeance,  
Armed with drawn swords, haste hither.

CHOR. Take thy seat  
Close to the altar, for if there thou die,  
Thy blood will on thy murderers fix a stain  
That ne'er can be effaced. But we with patience  
Are bound to suffer what the Fates inflict.

ION, CREUSA, CHORUS.

ION. Cephisus, O thou awful sire, who bear'st  
The semblance of a bull, what viper's this  
Thou hast begotten, or what dragon darting  
Flames most consuming from her murderous eyes!  
She with unbounded boldness is endued,  
And pestilent as those envenomed drops  
Of Gorgon's blood with which she sought to kill me.  
Seize her! Parnassus' rocks shall tear away  
The graceful ringlets of her streaming hair,  
When headlong from its summit she is thrown.  
Me hath propitious fortune here detained,  
Else to th' Athenian city had I gone,  
And fallen into a cruel step-dame's snare.  
But while I yet among my friends remain,

Thy heart have I explored, how great a pest  
 And foe thou art to me, for at thy doors  
 Hadst thou received me, thou to Pluto's realm  
 Wouldst instantly have hurled me down. Behold  
 The sorceress, what a complicated scene  
 Of treachery hath she framed, yet trembles not  
 The altar of Apollo to approach,  
 As if Heaven's vengeance could not reach her crimes.  
 But neither shall this altar nor the temple  
 Of Phœbus save thy life : for the compassion  
 Thou wouldst excite is rather due to me  
 And to my mother ; for although, in person,  
 She be not here, yet is that much-loved name  
 Ne'er absent from my thoughts.

CRE. To spare my life  
 In my own name I warn you, and in that  
 Of the vindictive god before whose altar  
 We stand.

ION. But what hast thou to do with Phœbus ?

CRE. Myself I to the Delphic god devote.

ION. Though thou his priest by poison wouldst have slain.

CRE. Phœbus in you had at that time no right,  
 Because you were your father's.

ION. I was once  
 Apollo's, and still call myself his son.

CRE. To him indeed you formerly belonged,  
 But now am I his votary, and no claim  
 Have you to such a title.

ION. Thy behaviour  
 Is impious, mine was pious erst.

CRE. I sought  
 To take away the life of you, a foe  
 To me and to my house.

ION. Did I with arms  
 Invade thy country ?

CRE. Yes, and you have fired  
 The mansions of Erectheus.

ION. With what brands,  
 What flames ?

CRE. You in my palace would have dwelt,  
Seizing it 'gainst my will.

ION. My sire bestowing  
On me the realm his valour had obtained.

CRE. But by what claim rule Æolus' race  
Over Minerva's city?

ION. With his sword  
He rescued it, and not with empty words.

CRE. He was but an ally, nor was that land  
His proper residence.

ION. Through the mere dread  
Of what might happen, wouldst thou then have slain me?

CRE. Lest I should perish if your life were spared.

ION. With envy art thou stung, because my sire  
Discovered me, while thou remain'st yet childless.

CRE. Would you invade the childless matron's house?

ION. But have not I some title to a share  
Of my sire's wealth?

CRE. A shield and spear are all  
Your father had, and all that you can claim.

ION. Leave Phœbus' altar and this hallowed seat.

CRE. Where'er she dwell, to your own mother give  
Such admonitions.

ION. Shalt thou 'scape unpunished  
For thy attempt to slay me?

CRE. If you mean  
To take away my life, let it be here  
Within this temple.

ION. What delight to thee  
Can it afford, amid the votive wreaths  
Of Phœbus to expire?

CRE. I shall afflict  
One by whom I have greatly been afflicted.

ION. Oh! 'tis most wondrous how, for man t' observe,  
The deity such laws as are not good  
Or prudent hath enacted. For th' unjust  
Before their altars ought to find no seat,  
But thence to be expelled; for 'tis not fit  
The statues of the gods by impious hands

Should be profaned ; but every virtuous man  
 Who is oppressed ought to find shelter there.  
 Yet is it most unseemly for the just  
 And the unjust, when here they meet together,  
 T' experience the same treatment from the gods.

PYTHIAN PRIESTESS, ION, CREUSA, CHORUS.

PYTHIAN PRIESTESS. Refrain thy rage, my son ; for I the  
 priestess

Of Phœbus, who the tripod's ancient rites  
 Maintain, selected from the Delphic maids,  
 Leave his oracular abode and pass  
 This consecrated threshold.

ION. Hail, dear mother.

Although you bore me not.

PYTHIAN PR. Yet call me such.

That name is not ungrateful.

ION. Have you heard

The stratagems she formed to murder me ?

PYTHIAN PR. I heard them ; and thou also hast trans-  
 gressed

Through cruelty.

ION. How ? Can it be unjust,

Those who would slay me, to reward with death ?

PYTHIAN PR. Wives with inveterate hatred ever view  
 Their husbands' sons sprung from another bed.

ION. And we who have by them been greatly wronged,  
 Abhor those step-dames.

PYTHIAN PR. Banish from thy soul  
 This rancour, now the temple thou art leaving,  
 And on thy journey to thy native land.

ION. How then would you advise me to proceed ?

PYTHIAN PR. Go unpolluted to th' Athenian realm  
 With prosperous omens.

ION. Sure the man who slays  
 His foes is unpolluted.

PYTHIAN PR. Act not thus :  
 But with attentive ear receive my counsels.

ION. O speak : for your benevolence to me  
Will dictate all you utter.

PYTHIAN PR. Dost thou see  
The chest beneath my arm?

ION. An ancient chest,  
With garlands decked, I see.

PYTHIAN PR. In this, thee erst  
A new-born infant, I received.

ION. What mean you?  
A fresh discovery opens.

PYTHIAN PR. I have kept  
These tokens secret ; but display them now.

ION. How could you hide them such a length of time  
As since you took me up?

PYTHIAN PR. The god required  
Thy service in his temple.

ION. Doth he now  
No longer need it? Who this doubt will solve?

PYTHIAN PR. By pointing out thy sire, he from these  
realms

Dismisses thee.

ION. But is it by command,  
Or from what motive, that this chest you keep?

PYTHIAN PR. Apollo's self inspired me with the thought—

ION. Of doing what? O speak! Conclude your tale.

PYTHIAN PR. With care preserving to the present time  
What I had found.

ION. But how can this to me  
Cause either gain or damage?

PYTHIAN PR. Know'st thou not,  
That round thee close these fillets were entwined?

ION. What you produce may aid me in th' attempt  
To find my mother.

PYTHIAN PR. With the god's consent,  
Which he did erst withhold.

ION. O day, that bring'st  
Blest visions to delight these winking eyes!

PYTHIAN. PR. Observe these hints, and diligently search  
For her who bore thee : traversing all Asia.

And Europe's farthest limits, thou shalt know  
 The truth of what I speak. Thee, O my son,  
 I nurtured, through a reverence for the god,  
 And here surrender to thy hands the pledges  
 Which 'twas his will I should receive and keep,  
 Though not commanded: but I cannot tell  
 What motive swayed him. For, that I possessed  
 These tokens, was by no man known, or where  
 They were concealed. Farewell, my love for thee  
 Is equal to a mother's. With these questions  
 Thou shouldst commence thy search for her who bore thee ;  
 First, whether she was any nymph of Delphi,  
 Who thee, the burden of her womb, exposed  
 Here in this fane ; but be thy next inquiry,  
 If any Grecian dame. For thou deriv'st  
 All the advantages thou hast, from me,  
 And from Apollo, who in this event  
 Hath been concerned.

ION.

Alas ! what plenteous tears  
 Steal from these eyes, while shuddering I revolve  
 How she who bore me, having erst indulged  
 A secret passion, did by stealth expose,  
 Nor at her breast sustain me : but unknown  
 I in the temple of Apollo led  
 A servile life. The god indeed was kind,  
 But fortune harsh : for at the very time  
 When in maternal arms I should have sported,  
 And tasted somewhat of the joys of life,  
 I of my dearest mother's fostering care  
 Was cruelly deprived. She from whose womb  
 I sprung is wretched too ; she hath endured  
 The self-same pangs with me, and lost the bliss  
 She might have hoped for from the son she bore.  
 But now this ancient coffer will I take  
 And carry for a present to the god ;  
 O may I hence discover nought to blast  
 My wishes ! For if haply she who bore me  
 Should prove some slave, it were a greater evil  
 To find my mother than to let her rest



In silence. I this votive gift, O Phœbus,  
Lodge in thy fane. But what presumptuous deed !  
Oppose I the benignant god who saved  
These tokens to assist me in discovering  
My mother ? I am bound to ope the lid,  
And act with courage : for what fate ordains  
I ne'er can supersede. Why were ye hidden  
From me, O sacred wreaths and bandages  
In which I was preserved ? This orbéd chest,  
Behold, how by some counsel of the god  
It hath been freed from the effects of age ;  
Still is its wicker substance undecayed,  
Although the time which intervened was long  
For such a store to last.

CRE.

Ah me ! What vision

Most unexpected do I see ?

CHOR.

Thou oft

Didst heretofore know when thou shouldst be silent.

CRE. My situation now no more admits  
Of silence : cease these counsels ; for I view  
The chest in which I, O my son, exposed you,  
While yet a tender infant, in the cave  
Of Cecrops midst th' encircling rocks of Macra.  
I therefore from this altar will depart,  
Though death should be the consequence.

ION.

O seize her ;

For she, with frenzy smitten by the god,  
Leaps from the hallowed altar : bind her arms.

CRE. The execution of your bloody purpose  
Suspend not : for this chest, and you, and all  
The hidden relics it contains of yours,  
My son, will I hold fast.

ION.

Are not these arts

Most dreadful ? With what specious words e'en now  
She claims me for a pledge !

CRE.

Not thus : but you,

Whom they hold dear, are by your friends discovered.

ION. Am I a friend of thine, and yet in secret  
Wouldst thou have murdered me ?

CRF.

Yea, and my son :

A name to both thy parents ever dear.

ION. Cease to contrive these fraudulent stratagems ;  
For I will clearly prove that thou art guilty.

CRE. Ah, would to Heaven that I could reach the mark  
At which I aim my shaft!

ION. Is that chest empty,  
Or filled with hidden stores?

Or filled with hidden stores :  
CRE. Here are the garments  
In which I erst exposed you.

Canst thou tell  
What name they bear before thine eyes behold them?

CRE. If I aright describe them not, to die  
Will I be nothing loth.

ION. Speak; for thy boldness  
Is somewhat wonderful.

CRE.                      Observe the robe  
Which erst I wove, when yet a maid.

Which erst I wove, when yet I was a maid,  
ION. What sort of garment is it ? for the virgins' loom  
Produces various woofs.

CRE Not yet complete ;  
The sketch bespeaks a learner.

ION. In what form,  
That here thou mayst not take me unawares?

CRE. The Gorgon fills the centre of that vest.

ION. O Jove, what fate pursues me !

CRE. With serpents is encompassed like the Ægis.

ION. Lo! this is the same garment. We have made  
Such a complete discovery as resembles  
The oracles of Heaven.

CRE. O woof which erst  
My virgin-shuttle wrought.

My virgin-shuttle wrought.  
ION. Canst thou produce  
Aught else, or in this evidence alone  
Art thou successful?

CRE. In a style antique  
Dragons with golden cheeks, Minerva's gift.

Who bids us rear our children 'mong such forms,  
In imitation of our ancestor  
Great Erichthonius.

ION. What is their effect,  
Or what can be their use? To me explain  
These golden ornaments.

CRIE.                               Them, O my son,  
Around his neck the new-born child should wear.

lon. Here are the dragons: but I wish to know  
What's the third sign.

CRE. Then round your brow I placed  
A garland of that olive which first grew  
On Pallas' rock; this, if it still be here,  
Hath not yet lost the verdure of its leaves,  
But flourishes unwithered like the tree  
From which 'twas taken.

ION. O my dearest mother,  
With what delight do I behold thy face !  
And on those cheeks with what delight imprint  
The kiss of filial rapture !

CRE. O my son,  
Who in a mother's partial eyes outshine  
The splendour of Hyperion (for the god  
Will pardon me), I clasp you in these arms  
Found unexpectedly, you whom I thought  
To have been plunged beneath the silent grave,  
And dwelt with Proserpine.

But while thou ling'st,  
O my dear mother, thy fond arms around me,  
To thee I seem like one who hath been dead  
And is restored to life.

CRE.                      Thou wide expanse  
Of radiant ether, in what grateful tone  
Shall I express myself? By clamorous shouts?  
Whence hath such unexpected pleasure reached me?  
To whom am I indebted for this joy?

ION. Sooner could I have looked for aught, O mother,  
Happening to me, than the discovery made  
In this auspicious hour, that I am thine.

CRE. With fear I tremble yet lest thou shouldst lose—

ION. The son who meets thy fond embrace?

CRE.

Such hopes

I from my soul had banished. Whence, O woman,

Didst thou with fostering arms receive my child?

By whom to Phœbus' temple was he borne?

ION. 'Twas the god's doing. But may prosperous fortune  
Be ours through the remainder of our lives,  
Which have been wretched hitherto.

CRE.

My son,

Not without tears were you brought forth; your mother

'Midst bitter lamentations from her arms

Cast you to earth: but now, while to your cheeks

I press my lips, again I breathe, I taste

The most ecstatic pleasures.

ION.

What thou sayst

May to us both with justice be applied.

CRE. No longer am I left without an heir,

No longer childless; my paternal house

Acquires new strength, and the Athenian realm

Hath yet its native monarchs. E'en Erectheus

Grows young again, nor shall our earth-born race

Be covered with the shades of night, but view

The sun's resplendent beams.

ION.

But, O my mother,

Since my sire too is present, let him share

The transports I to thee have given.

CRE.

What words

Are these which you have uttered, O my son?

ION. Who proves to be the author of my birth.

CRE. Why speak of this? For from another sire  
You spring, and not from Xuthus.

ION.

Me, alas!

In thy unwedded state, a spurious child,

Thou then didst bear.

CRE.

Nor yet had Hymen waved

For me his torch, or led the choral dance,

When, O my dearest son, for you I felt

A mother's throes.

ION. From what ignoble race  
Am I descended?

CRE. Witness she who slew  
The Gorgon.

ION. Ha! What mean'st thou by these words?

CRE. Who on my rocks, whence with spontaneous shoot  
The fragrant olive springs, my native hills,  
Fixes her seat.

ION. To me thou speak'st so darkly,  
That what thou mean'st I cannot comprehend.

CRE. Beneath the rock where her harmonious lays  
The nightingale attunes, I by Apollo—

ION. Why dost thou name Apollo?

CRE. Was embraced  
In secrecy—

ION. Speak on; for fair renown,  
And prosperous fortune, will to me accrue  
From the event which thou relat'st.

CRE. To Phœbus.  
While in its orbit the tenth moon revolved,  
I bore a son, whom I concealed.

ION. Most grateful  
Are these strange tidings, if thou utter truth.

CRE. The fillets which I erst, while yet a maid,  
Wove with my shuttle I around you twined;  
But you ne'er clung to this maternal breast,  
Nor did these hands for you the laver hold,  
But in a desert cavern were you thrown  
To perish, torn by the remorseless beaks  
Of hungry vultures.

ION. What a horrid deed  
Was this, in thee, O mother!

CRE. By my fears  
Held fast in bondage, O my son, your life  
I would have cast away—would then, though loth,  
Have murdered you.

ION. Thou too didst scarce escape  
From being slain by my unholy rage.

CRE. Such were my wretched fortunes then, and such

The apprehensions which I felt. Now here.  
 Now there, we by calamity are whirled,  
 Then sport anew in prosperous fortune's gales,  
 Which often veer; but may they fix at last!  
 May what I have endured suffice! But now,  
 My son, doth a propitious breeze succeed  
 The tempest of our woes.

CHOR. Let no man think  
 Aught wonderful that happens, when compared  
 With these events.

ION. O fortune, who hast wrought  
 A change in countless multitudes, whom first  
 Thou hast made wretched, and then blest anew;  
 What an important crisis of my life  
 Is this which I have reached, and been exposed  
 To dangers imminent, of slaying her  
 Who bore me, and enduring such a death  
 As I deserved not! While we view the sun  
 Perform his bright career, fresh truths like these  
 Each day lie open for the world to learn.  
 My mother (blest discovery!), thee I find,  
 Nor have I any reason to complain  
 Of being sprung from an ignoble sire.  
 But I would tell the rest to thee alone:  
 Come hither; let me whisper in thine ear,  
 And over these transactions cast a veil  
 Of darkness. Recollect, if at the time  
 When thou thy virgin purity didst forfeit,  
 Thou wert not by some secret paramour  
 Betrayed, and afterwards induced to charge  
 The god with having ruined thee; my scorn  
 Endeavouring to avoid, by the assertion  
 That Phœbus is my father, though by him  
 Thou wert not pregnant.

CRE. No, by her who fought,  
 Borne in a car sublime, for thundering Jove  
 Against the giant's earth-born race, Minerva,  
 Victorious goddess, by no mortal sire  
 Were you, my son, begotten, but by him  
 Who nurtured you, Apollo, mighty king.

ION. What motive, then, had he for yielding up  
His offspring to another sire, pretending  
That I am Xuthus' son?

CRE. The god asserts not  
That Xuthus was the author of your birth,  
But you, his offspring, doth on him bestow.  
For to a friend a friend may give his son  
To inherit his possessions.

ION. O my mother,  
An anxious doubt, whether the god speak truth,  
Or utter a fallacious oracle,  
Is cause sufficient to disturb my soul.

CRE. Hear then, my son, what thoughts to me occur.  
Your benefactor Phœbus places you  
In an illustrious house; but were you called  
The offspring of the god, you would receive  
For your inheritance nor wide domains  
Nor aught of rank paternal. For from him  
With whom my luckless union I concealed,  
And secretly attempted to have slain you,  
How could you look for aught? But he, promoting  
Your interest, to another sire consigns you.

ION. I cannot rashly credit tales like these.  
But I will go into the fane, and ask  
Apollo, whether from a mortal sire  
I spring, or whether I am Phœbus' son.  
Ha! Who is that, who on the pinnacles  
Of this high dome ascending, like the sun,  
Displays her front celestial? Let us fly,  
My mother, lest perchance we view the gods  
When we are not permitted to behold them.

MISERVA, ION, CREUSA, CHORUS

MIS. O stay, for 'tis from me you fly, who bear  
To you no hate, but in th' Athenian realm  
And here am equally your friend: I, Pallas,  
From whom your native land derives its name,  
Am hither come with swift career despatched  
By Phœbus, in your presence who himself

Deems it not meet t' appear, lest his past conduct  
In foul reproach involve him : but the god  
Sends me t' inform you that Creusa bore,  
And Phœbus was the father who begot you.  
But you, the god, as he sees fit, bestows,  
Not upon him who is your real sire,  
But hath contrived this plot that you may gain  
The heritage of an illustrious house.  
For when the holy oracle pronounced  
This riddle, fearing, by a mother's wiles,  
Lest you should bleed, or with vindictive hand  
That mother slay, he by a stratagem  
Hath extricated both. The royal seer  
Meant to have kept this secret, till at Athens  
He had proclaimed that you derive your birth  
From Phœbus and Creusa. But this matter  
That I may finish now, and the contents  
Of those important oracles reveal,  
Which to explore ye by your harnessed steeds  
Were hither drawn, attend. Creusa, take  
Thy son, to the Cecropian land repair,  
And place him on the throne ; for, from the race  
Of great Erectheus sprung, he is entitled  
To rule my favoured realm, and shall be famed  
Through Greece : for his four sons, sprung from one root,  
Shall, on their country, and its tribes who dwell  
Upon my sacred rock, their name confer ;  
Geleon the first ; then Hoples, Argades,  
And, from the shield I bear, a chief called Ægis  
Shall rule th' Ægichori. But their descendants,  
Born at a period by the Fates assigned,  
Amid the Cyclades shall dwell, in towns  
Encircled by the billowy deep, and havens  
Which to my realm will add new strength : the shores  
Of either continent shall they possess,  
Asia and Europe, but, from Ion, styled  
Ionians, they with glory shall be crowned,  
But from thee too and Xuthus shall descend  
A noble race ; Dorus, the mighty founder



Of the famed Doric realm ; in the domain  
 Of ancient Pelops, shall your second son,  
 Achæus, be the monarch of the coast  
 Bordering on Rhium's steep ascent—with pride  
 That nation shall adopt their leader's name.  
 In all things hath Apollo acted right ;  
 First, without pain he caused thee to bring forth,  
 Lest to thy friends thy shame should be revealed :  
 But after thou hadst borne this son, and swathed  
 Those fillets round him, he bade Hermes bring  
 The infant to this fane, and nurtured him,  
 Nor suffered him to die. Now, therefore, keep  
 Strict silence, nor declare that he is thine,  
 That Xuthus may exult in the idea  
 Of being father to the youth, while thou,  
 O woman, shalt enjoy the real bliss.  
 Farewell, for from this pause in your afflictions  
 I to you both announce a happier fate.

ION. O Pallas, daughter of imperial Jove,  
 Thy words I disbelieve not : for from Phœbus  
 And this illustrious dame am I convinced  
 That I derive my birth, which from the first  
 Was not improbable.

CRE. To what I speak  
 Now give attention : I commend Apollo,  
 Though erst I blamed him ; for he now restores  
 To me the son he formerly neglected.  
 Now are these portals pleasing to my sight,  
 And this oracular abode of Phœbus,  
 Which I so lately loathed. I now these rings  
 Seize with exulting hands, and at the threshold  
 Utter my grateful orisons.

MIN. The praises  
 Which thou bestow'st on Phœbus, I applaud,  
 And this thy sudden change : for though the aid  
 The gods afford be tardy, it at length  
 Proves most effectual.

CRE. Let us, O my son,  
 Repair to our own Athens.

MIN. Thither go,  
And I will follow.

CRE. Deign t' accompany  
Our steps, and to our city prove a friend.

MIN. Upon the throne of thy progenitors,  
There take thy seat.

ION. To me will such possession  
Be honourable.

CHOR. O Phœbus, son of Jove  
And of Latona, hail ! Whene'er his house  
Is shaken by calamity, the man  
Who pays due reverence to the gods hath cause  
To trust in their protection : for at length  
The virtuous shall obtain their due reward,  
Nor shall the wicked prosper in the land.

# M E D E A.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

NURSE OF MEDEA.	JASON.
ATTENDANT ON THE CHILDREN.	EGEUS.
MEDEA.	MESSANGER.
CHORUS OF CORINTHIAN WOMEN.	THE TWO SONS OF JASON AND
CREON.	MEDEA.

SCENE—BEFORE THE PALACE OF CREON AT CORINTH

### NURSE.

AH ! would to heaven the Argo ne'er had urged  
Its rapid voyage to the Colchian strand  
'Twixt the Cyanean rocks, nor had the pine  
Been fell in Pelion's forests, nor the hands  
Of those illustrious chiefs, who that famed bark  
Ascended to obtain, the golden fleece  
For royal Pelias, plied the stubborn oar ;  
So to Iolchos' turrets had my Queen  
Medea never sailed, her soul with love  
For Jason smitten, nor, as since her arts  
Prevailed on Pelias' daughters to destroy  
Their father, in this realm of Corinth dwelt  
An exile with her husband and her sons ;  
Thus to the citizens whose land received her  
Had she grown pleasing, and in all his schemes  
Assisted Jason : to the wedded pair,  
Hence bliss supreme arises, when the bond  
Of concord joins them : now their souls are filled  
With ruthless hate, and all affection's lost :  
For false to his own sons, and her I serve,

With a new consort of imperial birth  
Sleeps the perfidious Jason, to the daughter  
Of Creon wedded, lord of these domains.  
The wretched scorned Medea oft exclaims,  
"O by those oaths, by that right hand thou gav'st  
The pledge of faith!" She then invokes the gods  
To witness what requital she hath found  
From Jason. On a couch she lies, no food  
Receiving, her whole frame subdued by grief;  
And since she marked the treachery of her lord  
Melts into tears incessant, from the ground  
Her eyes she never raises, never turns  
Her face aside, but steadfast as a rock,  
Or as the ocean's rising billows, hears  
The counsels of her friends, save when she weeps  
In silent anguish, with her snowy neck  
Averted, for her sire, her native land,  
And home, which she forsaking hither came  
With him who scorns her now. She from her woes  
Too late hath learnt how enviable the lot  
Of those who leave not their paternal roof.  
She even hates her children, nor with joy  
Beholds them: much I dread lest she contrive  
Some enterprise unheard of, for her soul  
Is vehement, nor will she tamely brook  
Injurious treatment; well, full well I know  
Her temper, which alarms me, lest she steal  
Into their chamber, where the genial couch  
Is spread, and with the sword their vitals pierce,  
Or to the slaughter of the bridegroom add  
That of the monarch, and in some mischance,  
Yet more severe than death, herself involve:  
For dreadful is her wrath, nor will the object  
Of her aversion gain an easy triumph.  
But lo, returning from the race, her sons  
Draw near: they think not of their mother's woes,  
For youthful souls are strangers to affliction.

ATTENDANT, *with the SONS of JASON and MEDEA*, NURSE.

ATT. O thou, who for a length of time hast dwelt  
Beneath the roofs of that illustrious dame  
I serve, why stand'st thou at these gates alone  
Repeating to thyself a doleful tale :  
Or wherefore by Medea from her presence  
Art thou dismissed ?

NUR. Old man, O you who tend  
On Jason's sons, to faithful servants aught  
Of evil fortune that befalls their lords  
Is a calamity : but such a pitch  
Of grief am I arrived at, that I felt  
An impulse which constrained me to come forth  
From these abodes, and to the conscious earth  
And heaven proclaim the lost Medea's fate.

ATT. Cease not the complaints of that unhappy dame ?

NUR. Your ignorance I envy : for her woes  
Are but beginning, nor have yet attained  
Their mid career.

ATT. O how devoid of reason,  
If we with terms thus harsh may brand our lords,  
Of ills more recent nothing yet she knows.

NUR. Old man, what mean you ? Scruple not to speak.

ATT. Nought. What I have already said repents me.

NUR. I by that beard conjure you not to hide  
The secret from your faithful fellow-servant.  
For I the strictest silence will observe  
If it be needful.

ATT. Some one I o'erheard  
(Appearing not to listen, as I came  
Where aged men sit near Pirene's fount  
And hurl their dice) say, that from Corinth's land  
Creon, the lord of these domains, will banish  
The children with their mother ; but I know not  
Whether th' intelligence be true, and wish  
It may prove otherwise.

NUR. Will Jason brook

Such an injurious treatment of his sons,  
Although he be at variance with their mother ?

ATT. By new connections are all former ties  
Dissolved, and he no longer is a friend  
To this neglected race.

NUR. We shall be plunged  
In utter ruin, if to our old woes,  
Yet unexhausted, any fresh we add.

ATT. Be silent, and suppress the dismal tale,  
For 'tis unfit our royal mistress know.

NUR. Hear, O ye children, how your father's soul  
Is turned against you : still, that he may perish  
I do not pray, because he is my lord ;  
Yet treacherous to his friends hath he been found.

ATT. Who is not treacherous ? Hast thou lived so long  
Without discerning how self-love prevails  
O'er social ? Some by glory, some by gain,  
Are prompted. Then what wonder, for the sake  
Of a new consort, if the father slight  
These children ?

NUR. Go, all will be well, go in.  
Keep them as far as possible away,  
Nor suffer them to come into the presence  
Of their afflicted mother ; for her eyes  
Have I just seen with wild distraction fired.  
As if some horrid purpose against them  
She meant to execute ; her wrath I know  
Will not be pacified, til on some victim  
It like a thunderbolt from Heaven descends :  
May she assail her foes alone, nor aim  
The stroke at those she ought to hold most dear.

MED. [*within.*] Ah me ! how grievous are my woes ! What  
Can I devise to end this hated life ? [means

NUR. 'Tis as I said : strong agitations seize  
Your mother's heart, her choler's raised. Dear children,  
Beneath these roofs hie instantly, nor come  
Into her sight, accost her not, beware  
Of these ferocious manners and the rage  
Which boils in that ungovernable spirit.

Go with the utmost speed, for I perceive  
Too clearly that her plaints, which in thick clouds  
Arise at first, will kindle ere 'tis long  
With tenfold violence. What deeds of horror  
From that high-soaring, that remorseless soul,  
May we expect, when goaded by despair !

[*Exit ATTENDANT and SONS.*]

MED. [*within.*] I have endured, alas ! I have endured—  
Wretch that I am !—such agonies as call  
For loudest plaints. Ye execrable sons  
Of a devoted mother, perish ye  
With your false sire, and perish his whole house !

NUR. Why should the sons—ah, wretched me !—partake  
Their father's guilt ? Why hat'st thou them ? Ah me !  
How greatly, O ye children, do I fear  
Lest mischief should befall you : for the souls  
Of kings are prone to cruelty, so seldom  
Subdued, and over others wont to rule,  
That it is difficult for such to change  
Their angry purpose. Happier I esteem  
The lot of those who still are wont to live  
Among their equals. May I thus grow old,  
If not in splendour, yet with safety blest !  
For first of all, renown attends the name  
Of mediocrity, and to mankind  
Such station is more useful : but not long  
Can the extremes of grandeur ever last ;  
And heavier are the curses which it brings  
When Fortune visits us in all her wrath.

CHORUS, NURSE.

CHOR. The voice of Colchias' hapless dame I heard—  
A clamorous voice, nor yet is she appeased.  
Speak, O thou aged matron, for her cries  
I from the innermost apartment heard ;  
Nor can I triumph in the woes with which  
This house is visited ; for to my soul  
Dear are its interests.

NUR. This whole house is plunged

In ruin, and its interests are no more.  
 While Corinth's palace to our lord affords  
 A residence, within her chamber pines  
 My mistress, and the counsels of her friends  
 Afford no comfort to her tortured soul.

MED. [*within.*] O that a flaming thunderbolt from Heaven  
 Would pierce this brain ! for what can longer life  
 To me avail ? Fain would I seek repose  
 In death, and cast away this hated being.

CHOR. Heard'st thou, all-righteous Jove, thou fostering earth,  
 And thou, O radiant lamp of day, what plaints,  
 What clamorous plaints this miserable wife  
 Hath uttered ? Through insatiable desire,  
 Ah why would you precipitate your death ?  
 O most unwise ! These imprecations spare.  
 What if your lord's affections are engaged  
 By a new bride, reproach him not, for Jove  
 Will be the dread avenger of your wrongs ;  
 Nor melt away with unavailing grief,  
 Weeping for the lost partner of your bed.

MED. [*within.*] Great Themis and Diana, awful queen,  
 Do ye behold the insults I endure,  
 Though by each oath most holy I have bound  
 That execrable husband. May I see  
 Him and his bride, torn limb from limb, bestrew  
 The palace ; me have they presumed to wrong,  
 Although I ne'er provoked them. O my sire,  
 And thou my native land, whence I with shame  
 Departed when my brother I had slain.

NUR. Heard ye not all she said, with a loud voice  
 Invoking Themis, who fulfils the vow,  
 And Jove, to whom the tribes of men look up  
 As guardian of their oaths. Medea's rage  
 Can by no trivial vengeance be appeased.

CHOR. Could we but draw her hither, and prevail  
 On her to hear the counsels we suggest,  
 Then haply might she check that bitter wrath,  
 That vehemence of temper ; for my zeal  
 Shall not be spared to aid my friends. But go,



And say, "O hasten, ere to those within  
Thou do some mischief, for these sorrows rush  
With an impetuous tempest on thy soul."

NUR. This will I do ; though there is cause to fear  
That on my mistress I shall ne'er prevail :  
Yet I my labour gladly will bestow.  
Though such a look she on her servants casts  
As the ferocious lioness who guards  
Her tender young, when any one draws near  
To speak to her. Thou wouldst not judge amiss,  
In charging folly and a total want  
Of wisdom on the men of ancient days,  
Who for their festivals invented hymns,  
And to the banquet and the genial board  
Confined those accents which o'er human life  
Diffuse ecstatic pleasures : but no artist  
Hath yet discovered, by the tuneful song,  
And varied modulations of the lyre,  
How we those piercing sorrows may assuage  
Whence slaughters and such horrid mischiefs spring  
As many a prosperous mansion have o'erthrown.  
Could music interpose her healing aid  
In these inveterate maladies, such gift  
Had been the first of blessings to mankind :  
But, 'midst choice viands and the circling bowl,  
Why should those minstrels strain their useless throat ?  
To cheer the drooping heart, convivial joys  
Are in themselves sufficient. [Exit NURSE.]

CHOR. Mingled groans  
And lamentations burst upon mine ear :  
She in the bitterness of soul exclaims  
Against her impious husband, who betrayed  
His plighted faith. By grievous wrongs oppress,  
She the vindictive gods invokes, and Themis,  
Jove's daughter, guardian of the sacred oath,  
Who o'er the waves to Greece benignly steered  
Their bark adventurous, launched in midnight gloom,  
Through ocean's gates which never can be closed :

## MEDEA, CHORUS.

MED. From my apartment, ye Corinthian dames,  
Lest ye my conduct censure, I come forth :  
For I have known full many who obtained  
Fame and high rank ; some to the public gaze  
Stood ever forth, while others, in a sphere  
More distant, chose their merits to display :  
Nor yet a few, who, studious of repose,  
Have with malignant obloquy been called  
Devoid of spirit : for no human eyes  
Can form a just discernment ; at one glance,  
Before the inmost secrets of the heart  
Are clearly known, a bitter hate 'gainst him  
Who never wronged us they too oft inspire.  
But 'tis a stranger's duty to adopt  
The manners of the land in which he dwells :  
Nor can I praise that native, led astray  
By mere perverseness and o'erweening folly,  
Who bitter enmity incurs from those  
Of his own city. But, alas ! my friends,  
This unforeseen calamity hath withered  
The vigour of my soul. I am undone,  
Bereft of every joy that life can yield,  
And therefore wish to die. For as to him,  
My husband, whom it did import me most  
To have a thorough knowledge of, he proves  
The worst of men. But sure among all those  
Who have with breath and reason been endued,  
We women are the most unhappy race.  
First, with abundant gold are we constrained  
To buy a husband, and in him receive  
A haughty master. Still doth there remain  
One mischief than this mischief yet more grievous,  
The hazard whether we procure a mate  
Worthless or virtuous : for divorces bring  
Reproach to woman, nor must she renounce  
The man she wedded ; as for her who comes  
Where usages and edicts, which at home

She learnt not, are established, she the gift  
 Of divination needs to teach her how  
 A husband must be chosen : if aright  
 These duties we perform, and he the yoke  
 Of wedlock with complacency sustains,  
 Ours is a happy life ; but if we fail  
 In this great object, better 'twere to die.  
 For, when afflicted by domestic ills,  
 A man goes forth, his choler to appease,  
 And to some friend or comrade can reveal  
 What he endures ; but we to him alone  
 For succour must look up. They still contend  
 That we, at home remaining, lead a life  
 Exempt from danger, while they launch the spear :  
 False are these judgments ; rather would I thrice,  
 Armed with a target, in th' embattled field  
 Maintain my stand, than suffer once the throes  
 Of childbirth. But this language suits not you :  
 This is your native city, the abode  
 Of your loved parents, every comfort life  
 Can furnish is at hand, and with your friends  
 You here converse : but I, forlorn, and left  
 Without a home, am by that husband scorned  
 Who carried me from a Barbarian realm.  
 Nor mother, brother, or relation now  
 Have I, to whom I 'midst these storms of woe,  
 Like an auspicious haven, can repair.  
 Thus far I therefore crave ye will espouse  
 My interests, as if haply any means  
 Or any stratagem can be devised  
 For me with justice to avenge these wrongs  
 On my pernicious husband, on the king  
 Who to that husband's arms his daughter gave,  
 And the new-wedded princess ; to observe  
 Strict silence. For although at other times  
 A woman, filled with terror, is unfit  
 For battle, or to face the lifted sword,  
 She when her soul by marriage wrongs is fired,  
 Thirsts with a rage unparalleled for blood.

CHOR. The silence you request I will observe,  
 For justly on your lord may you inflict  
 Severest vengeance : still I wonder not  
 If your disastrous fortunes you bewail :  
 But Creon I behold who wields the sceptre  
 Of these domains ; the monarch hither comes  
 His fresh resolves in person to declare.

CREON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

CRE. Thee, O Medea, who, beneath those looks  
 Stern and forbidding, harbour'st 'gainst thy lord  
 Resentment, I command to leave these realms  
 An exile ; for companions of thy flight  
 Take both thy children with thee, nor delay.  
 Myself pronounce this edict : I my home  
 Will not revisit, from the utmost bounds  
 Of this domain, till I have cast thee forth.

MED. Ah, wretched me ! I utterly am ruined :  
 For in the swift pursuit, my ruthless foes,  
 Each cable loosing, have unfurled their sails,  
 Nor can I land on any friendly shore  
 To save myself, yet am resolved to speak,  
 Though punishment impend. What cause, O Creon  
 Have you for banishing me ?

CRE. Thee I dread  
 (No longer is it needful to disguise  
 My thoughts) lest 'gainst my daughter thou contrive  
 Some evil such as medicine cannot reach.  
 Full many incidents conspire to raise  
 This apprehension : with a deep-laid craft  
 Art thou endued, expert in the device  
 Of mischiefs numberless, thou also griev'st  
 Since thou art severed from thy husband's bed.  
 I am informed, too, thou hast menaced vengeance  
 'Gainst me, because my daughter I bestowed  
 In marriage, and the bridegroom, and his bride.  
 Against these threats I therefore ought to guard  
 Before they take effect ; and better far  
 Is it for me, O woman, to incur

Thy hatred now, than, soothed by thy mild words,  
Hereafter my forbearance to bewail.

MED. Not now, alas ! for the first time, but oft  
To me, O Creon, hath opinion proved  
Most baleful, and the source of grievous woes.  
Nor ever ought the man, who is possess  
Of a sound judgment, to train up his children  
To be too wise : for they who live exempt  
From war and all its toils, the odious name  
Among their fellow-citizens acquire  
Of abject sluggards. If to the unwise  
You some fresh doctrine broach, you are esteemed  
Not sapient, but a trifler : when to those  
Who in their own conceit possess each branch  
Of knowledge, you in state affairs obtain  
Superior fame, to them you grow obnoxious.  
I also feel the grievance I lament ;  
Some envy my attainments, others think  
My temper uncomplying, though my wisdom  
Is not transcendent. But from me it seems  
You apprehend some violence ; dismiss  
Those fears ; my situation now is such,  
O Creon, that to monarchs I can give  
No umbrage : and in what respect have you  
Treated me with injustice ? You bestowed  
Your daughter where your inclination led.  
Though I abhor my husband, I suppose  
That you have acted wisely, nor repine  
At your prosperity. Conclude the match ;  
Be happy : but allow me in this land  
Yet to reside ; for I my wrongs will bear  
In silence, and to my superiors yield.

CRE. Soft is the sound of thy persuasive words,  
But in my soul I feel the strongest dread  
Lest thou devise some mischief, and now less  
Than ever can I trust thee ; for 'gainst those  
Of hasty tempers with more ease we guard,  
Or men or women, than the silent foe  
Who acts with prudence. Therefore be thou gone

With speed, no answer make : it is decreed,  
 Nor hast thou art sufficient to avert  
 Thy doom of banishment ; for well aware  
 Am I thou hat'st me.

MED. Spare me, by those knees  
 And your new-wedded daughter, I implore.

CRE. Lavish of words, thou never shalt persuade me.

MED. Will you then drive me hence, and to my prayers  
 No reverence yield ?

CRE. I do not love thee more  
 Than those of my own house.

MED. With what regret  
 Do I remember thee, my native land !

CRE. Except my children, I hold nought so dear.

MED. To mortals what a dreadful scourge is love !

CRE. As fortune dictates, love becomes, I ween,  
 Either a curse or blessing.

MED. Righteous Jove,  
 Let not the author of my woes escape thee.

CRE. Away, vain woman, free me from my cares.

MED. No lack of cares have I.

CRE. Thou from this spot  
 Shalt by my servants' hands ere long be torn.

MED. Not thus, O Creon, I your mercy crave.

CRE. To trouble me, it seems, thou art resolved.

MED. I will depart, nor urge this fond request.

CRE. Why dost thou struggle then, nor from our realm  
 Withdraw thyself ?

MED. Allow me this one day  
 Here to remain, till my maturer thoughts  
 Instruct me to what region I can fly,  
 Where for my sons find shelter, since their sire  
 Attends not to the welfare of his race.  
 Take pity on them, for you also know  
 What 'tis to be a parent, and must feel  
 Parental love : as for myself, I heed not  
 The being doomed to exile, but lament  
 Their hapless fortunes.

CRE. No tyrannic rage

Within this bosom dwells, but pity on  
 Hath warped my better judgment, and though now  
 My error I perceive, shall thy bequest  
 Be granted. Yet of this must I forewarn thee :  
 If when to-morrow with his orient beams  
 Phœbus the world revisits, he shall view  
 Thee and thy children still within the bounds  
 Of these domains, thou certainly shalt die—  
 Th' irrevocable sentence is pronounced.  
 But if thou needs must tarry, tarry here  
 This single day, for in so short a space  
 Thou canst not execute the ills I dread. [Exit CREON

CHOR. Alas ! thou wretched woman, overpowered  
 By thy afflictions, whither wilt thou turn ?  
 What hospitable board, what mansion, find,  
 Or country to protect thee from these ills ?  
 Into what storms of misery have the gods  
 Caused thee to rush !

MED. On every side distress  
 Assails me : who can contradict this truth ?  
 Yet think not that my sorrows thus shall end,  
 By yon new-wedded pair must be sustained  
 Dire conflicts, and no light or trivial woes  
 By them who in affinity are joined  
 With this devoted house. Can ye suppose  
 That I would e'er have soothed him, had no gain  
 Or stratagem induced me ? Else to him  
 Never would I have spoken, nor once raised  
 My suppliant hands. But now is he so lost  
 In folly, that, when all my schemes with ease  
 He might have baffled, if he from this land  
 Had cast me forth, he grants me to remain  
 For this one day, and ere the setting sun  
 Three of my foes will I destroy—the sire,  
 The daughter, and my husband : various means  
 Have I of slaying them, and, O my friends,  
 Am at a loss to fix on which I first  
 Shall undertake, or to consume with flames  
 The bridal mansion, or a dagger plunge

Into their bosoms, entering unperceived  
The chamber where they sleep But there remains  
One danger to obstruct my path : if caught  
Stealing into the palace, and intent  
On such emprise, in death shall I afford  
A subject of derision to my foes.  
This obvious method were the best, in which  
I am most skilled, to take their lives away  
By sorceries. Be it so ; suppose them dead.  
What city will receive me for its guest,  
What hospitable foreigner afford  
A shelter in his land, or to his hearth  
Admit, or snatch me from impending fate ?  
Alas ! I have no friend. I will delay  
A little longer therefore ; if perchance,  
To screen me from destruction, I can find  
Some fortress, then I in this deed of blood  
With artifice and silence will engage ;  
But, if by woes inextricable urged  
Too closely, snatching up the dagger them  
Am I resolved to slay, although myself  
Must perish too ; for courage unappalled  
This bosom animates. By that dread queen,  
By her whom first of all th' immortal powers  
I worship, and to aid my bold emprise  
Have chosen, the thrice awful Hecaté,  
Who in my innermost apartment dwells,  
Not one of them shall triumph in the pangs  
With which they wound my heart ; for I will render  
This spousal rite to them a plenteous source  
Of bitterness and mourning—they shall rue  
Their union, rue my exile from this land.  
But now come on, nor, O Medea, spare  
Thy utmost science to devise and frame  
Deep stratagems, with swift career advance  
To deeds of horror. Such a strife demands  
Thy utmost courage. Hast thou any sense  
Of these indignities ? Nor is it fit  
That thou, who spring'st from an illustrious sire,



And from that great progenitor the sun,  
Shouldst be derided by the impious brood  
Of Sisyphus, at Jason's nuptial feast  
Exposed to scorn : for thou hast ample skill  
To right thyself. Although by Nature formed  
Without a genius apt for virtuous deeds,  
We women are in mischiefs most expert.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Now upward to their source the rivers flow,  
And in a retrograde career  
Justice and all the baffled virtues go.  
The views of man are insincere,  
Nor to the gods though he appeal,  
And with an oath each promise seal,  
Can he be trusted. Yet doth veering fame  
Loudly assert the female claim,  
Causing our sex to be renowned,  
And our whole lives with glory crowned.  
No longer shall we mourn the wrongs  
Of slanderous and inhuman tongues.

I. 2.

Nor shall the Muses, as in ancient days,  
Make the deceit of womankind  
The constant theme of their malignant lays.  
For ne'er on our uncultured mind  
Hath Phœbus, god of verse, bestowed  
Genius to frame the lofty ode ;  
Else had we waked the lyre, and in reply  
With descants on man's infamy  
Oft lengthened out th' opprobrious page.  
Yet may we from each distant age  
Collect such records as disgrace  
Both us and man's imperious race.

## II. 1.

By love distracted, from thy native strand,  
 Thou 'twixt the ocean's clashing rocks didst sail  
 But now, loathed inmate of a foreign land,  
 Thy treacherous husband's loss art doomed to wail.  
 O hapless matron, overwhelmed with woe,  
 From this un pitying realm dishonoured must thou go.

## II. 2.

No longer sacred oaths their credit bear,  
 And virtuous shame hath left the Grecian plain,  
 She mounts to Heaven, and breathes a purer air.  
 For thee doth no paternal house remain  
 The sheltering haven from affliction's tides ;  
 Over these hostile roofs a mightier queen presides.

## JASON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

JAS. Not now for the first time, but oft, full oft  
 Have I observed that anger is a pest  
 The most unruly. For when in this land,  
 These mansions, you in peace might have abode,  
 By patiently submitting to the will  
 Of your superiors, you, for empty words,  
 Are doomed to exile. Not that I regard  
 Your calling Jason with incessant rage  
 The worst of men ; but for those bitter taunts  
 With which you have reviled a mighty king,  
 Too mild a penalty may you esteem  
 Such banishment. I still have soothed the wrath  
 Of the offended monarch, still have wished  
 That you might here continue ; but no bounds  
 Your folly knows, nor can that tongue e'er cease  
 To utter menaces against your lords ;  
 Hence from these regions justly are you doomed  
 To be cast forth. But with unwearied love  
 Attentive to your interest am I come,  
 Lest with your children you by cruel want  
 Should be encompassed ; exile with it brings

Full many evils. Me, though you abhor,  
To you I harbour no unfriendly thought.

MED. Thou worst of villains! for this bitter charge  
Against thy abject cowardice my tongue  
May justly urge; com'st thou to me, O wretch,  
Who to the gods art odious, and to me  
And all the human race? It is no proof  
Of courage, or of steadfastness, to face  
Thy injured friends, but impudence, the worst  
Of all diseases. Yet hast thou done well  
In coming: I by uttering the reproaches  
Which thou deservest shall ease my burdened soul,  
And thou wilt grieve to hear them. With th' events  
Which happened first will I begin my charge.  
Each Grecian chief who in the Argo sailed  
Knows how from death I saved thee, when to yoke  
The raging bulls whose nostrils poured forth flames,  
And sow the baleful harvest, thou wert sent:  
Then having slain the dragon, who preserved  
With many a scaly fold the golden fleece,  
Nor ever closed in sleep his watchful eyes,  
I caused the morn with its auspicious beams  
To shine on thy deliverance; but, my sire  
And native land betraying, came with thee  
To Pelion, and Iolchos' gates: for love  
Prevailed o'er reason. Pelias next I slew—  
Most wretched death—by his own daughters' hands.  
And thus delivered thee from all thy fears.  
Yet though to me, O most ungrateful man,  
Thus much indebted, hast thou proved a traitor,  
And to the arms of this new consort fled.  
Although a rising progeny is thine.  
Hadst thou been childless, 'twere a venial fault  
In thee to court another for thy bride.  
But vanished is the faith which oaths erst bore,  
Nor can I judge whether thou think'st the gods  
Who ruled the world have lost their ancient power  
Or that fresh laws at present are in force  
Among mankind, because thou to thyself

Art conscious, thou thy plighted faith hast broken,  
O my right hand, which thou didst oft embrace,  
Oft to these knees a suppliant cling ! How vainly  
Did I my virgin purity yield up  
To a perfidious husband, led astray  
By flattering hopes ! Yet I to thee will speak  
As if thou wert a friend, and I expected  
From thee some mighty favour to obtain :  
Yet thou, if strictly questioned, must appear  
More odious. Whither shall I turn me now ?  
To those deserted mansions of my father,  
Which, with my country, I to thee betrayed,  
And hither came ; or to the wretched daughters  
Of Pelias ? They forsooth, whose sire I slew,  
Beneath their roofs with kindness would receive me.  
'Tis even thus : by those of my own house  
Am I detested, and, to serve thy cause,  
Those very friends, whom least of all I ought  
To have unkindly treated, have I made  
My enemies. But eager to reay  
Such favours, 'mongst unnumbered Grecian dames,  
On me superior bliss hast thou bestowed,  
And I, unhappy woman, find in thee  
A husband who deserves to be admired  
For his fidelity. But from this realm  
When I am exiled, and by every friend  
Deserted, with my children left forlorn,  
A glorious triumph, in thy bridal hour,  
To thee will it afford, if those thy sons,  
And I who saved thee, should like vagrants roam.  
Wherefore, O Jove, didst thou instruct mankind  
How to distinguish by undoubted marks  
Counterfeit gold, yet in the front of vice  
Impress no brand to show the tainted heart ?

CHOR. How sharp their wrath, how hard to be appeased,  
When friends with friends begin the cruel strife.

JAS. I ought not to be rash, it seems, in speech,  
But like the skilful pilot, who, with sails  
Scarce half unfurled, his bark more surely guides,

Escape, O woman, your ungoverned tongue.  
 Since you the benefits on me conferred  
 Exaggerate in so proud a strain, I deem  
 That I to Venus only, and no god  
 Or man beside, my prosperous voyage owe.  
 Although a wondrous subtlety of soul  
 To you belong, 'twere an invidious speech  
 For me to make should I relate how Love  
 By his inevitable shafts constrained you  
 To save my life. I will not therefore state  
 This argument too nicely, but allow,  
 As you did aid me, it was kindly done.  
 But by preserving me have you gained more  
 Than you bestowed, as I shall prove : and first,  
 Transplanted from barbaric shores, you dwell  
 In Grecian regions, and have here been taught  
 To act as justice and the laws ordain,  
 Nôr follow the caprice of brutal strength.  
 By all the Greeks your wisdom is perceived,  
 And you acquire renown ; but had you still  
 Inhabited that distant spot of earth,  
 You never had been named. I would not wish  
 For mansions heaped with gold, or to exceed  
 The sweetest notes of Orpheus' magic lyre,  
 Were those unfading wreaths which fame bestows  
 From me withheld by fortune. I thus far  
 On my own labours only have discoursed.  
 For you this odious strife of words began.  
 But in espousing Creon's royal daughter,  
 With which you have reproached me, I will prove  
 That I in acting thus am wise and chaste,  
 That I to you have been the best of friends,  
 And to our children. But make no reply.  
 Since hither from Iolchos' land I came,  
 Accompanied by many woes, and such  
 As could not be avoided, what device  
 More advantageous could an exile frame  
 Than wedding the king's daughter ? Not through hate  
 To you, which you reproach me with, not smitten

With love for a new consort, or a wish  
 The number of my children to augment :  
 For those we have already might suffice,  
 And I complain not. But to me it seemed  
 Of great importance that we both might live  
 As suits our rank, nor suffer abject need,  
 Well knowing taht each friend avoids the poor.  
 I also wished to educate our sons  
 In such a manner as befits my race  
 And with their noble brothers yet unborn,  
 Make them one family, that thus, my house  
 Cementing, I might prosper. In some measure  
 Is it your interest too that by my bride  
 I should have sons, and me it much imports,  
 By future children, to provide for those  
 Who are in being. Have I judged amiss ?  
 You would not censure me, unless your soul  
 Were by a rival stung. But your whole sex  
 Hath these ideas ; if in marriage blest  
 Ye deem nought wanting, but if some reverse  
 Of fortune e'er betide the nuptial couch,  
 All that was good and lovely ye abhor.  
 Far better were it for the human race  
 Had children been produced by other means,  
 No females e'er existing : hence might man  
 Exempt from every evil have remained.

CHOR. Thy words hast thou with specious art adorned.  
 Yet thou to me (it is against my will  
 That I such language hold), O Jason, seem'st  
 Not to have acted justly in betraying  
 Thy consort.

MED. From the many I dissent  
 In many points : for, in my judgment, he  
 Who tramples on the laws, but can express  
 His thoughts with plausibility, deserves  
 Severest punishment : for that injustice  
 On which he glories, with his artful tongue,  
 That he a fair appearance can bestow,  
 He dares to practise, nor is truly wise.

No longer then this specious language hold  
To me, who by one word can strike thee dumb.  
Hadst thou not acted with a base design,  
It was thy duty first to have prevailed  
On me to give consent, ere these espousals  
Thou hadst contracted, nor kept such design  
A secret from thy friends.

JAS.                                You would have served  
My cause most gloriously, had I disclosed  
To you my purposed nuptials, when the rage  
Of that proud heart still unsubdued remains.

MED. Thy real motive was not what thou sayst,  
But a Barbarian wife, in thy old age,  
Might have appeared to tarnish thy renown.

JAS. Be well assured, love urged me not to take  
The daughter of the monarch to my bed.  
But 'twas my wish to save you from distress.  
As I already have declared, and raise  
Some royal brothers to our former sons,  
Strengthening with fresh supports our shattered house.

MED. May that prosperity which brings remorse  
Be never mine, nor riches such as sting  
The soul with anguish.

JAS. . . . . Are you not aware  
You soon will change your mind and grow more wise?  
Forbear to spurn the blessings you possess,  
Nor droop beneath imaginary woes,  
When you are happy.

MED.                        Scoff at my distress,  
For thou hast an asylum to receive thee:  
But from this land am I constrained to roam  
A lonely exile.

JAS.            This was your own choice :  
Accuse none else.

MED.           What have I done—betrayed  
My plighted faith and sought a foreign bed?

JAS. You uttered impious curses 'gainst the king.

MED. I also in thy mansions am accursed.

JAS. With you I on these subjects will contend

No longer. But speak freely, what relief,  
 Or for the children or your exiled state,  
 You from my prosperous fortunes would receive:  
 For with a liberal hand am I inclined  
 My bounties to confer, and hence despatch  
 Such tokens, as to hospitable kindness  
 Will recommend you. Woman, to refuse  
 These offers were mere folly; from your soul  
 Banish resentment, and no trifling gain  
 Will hence ensue.

MED. No use I of thy friends  
 Will make, nor aught accept; thy presents spare,  
 For nothing which the wicked man can give  
 Proves beneficial.

JAS. I invoke the gods  
 To witness that I gladly would supply  
 You and your children with whate'er ye need:  
 But you these favours loathe, and with disdain  
 Repel your friends: hence an increase of woe  
 Shall be your lot.

MED. Be gone; for thou, with love  
 For thy young bride inflamed, too long remain'st  
 Without the palace. Wed her; though perhaps  
 (Yet with submission to the righteous gods,  
 This I announce) such marriage thou mayst rue.

[Exit JASON.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

Th' immoderate loves in their career,  
 Nor glory nor esteem attends,  
 But when the Cyprian queen descends  
 Benignant from her starry sphere,  
 No goddess can more justly claim  
 From man the grateful prayer.  
 Thy wrath, O Venus, still forbear,  
 Nor at my tender bosom aim  
 That venom'd arrow, ever wont t' inspire  
 Winged from thy golden bow, the pangs of keen desire.



I. 2.

May I in modesty delight,  
 Best present which the gods can give,  
 Nor torn by jarring passions live  
 A prey to wrath and cankered spite,  
 Still envious of a rival's charms,  
 Nor rouse the endless strife  
 While on my soul another wife  
 Impresses vehement alarms :  
 On us, dread queen, thy mildest influence shed,  
 Thou who discern'st each crime that stains the nuptial bed.

II. 1.

My native land, and dearest home !  
 May I ne'er know an exiled state,  
 Nor be it ever my sad fate  
 While from thy well-known bourn I roam,  
 My hopeless anguish to bemoan.  
 Rather let death, let death  
 Take at that hour my forfeit breath,  
 For surely never was there known  
 On earth a curse so great as to exceed,  
 From his loved country torn, the wretched exile's need.

II. 2.

These eyes attest thy piteous tale,  
 Which not from fame alone we know ;  
 But, O thou royal dame, thy woe  
 No generous city doth bewail,  
 Nor one among thy former friends.  
 Abhorred by Heaven and earth,  
 Perish the wretch devoid of worth,  
 Engrossed by mean and selfish ends,  
 Whose heart expands not those he loved to aid ;  
 Never may I lament attachments thus repaid.

ÆGEUS, MEDEA, CHORUS.

ÆG. Medea, hail ! for no man can devise  
 Terms more auspicious to accost his friends.

MED. And you, O son of wise Pandion, hail

Illustrious Ægeus. But to these domains  
Whence came you?

ÆG. From Apollo's ancient shrine.

MED. But to that centre of the world, whence sounds  
Prophetic issue, why did you repair?

ÆG. To question by what means I may obtain  
A race of children.

MED. By the gods, inform me,  
Are you still doomed to drag a childless life?

ÆG. Such is the influence of some adverse demon.

MED. Have you a wife, or did you never try  
The nuptial yoke?

ÆG. With wedlock's sacred bonds  
I am not unacquainted.

MED. On the subject  
Of children, what did Phœbus say?

ÆG. His words  
Were such as mortals cannot comprehend.

MED. Am I allowed to know the god's reply?

ÆG. Thou surely art : such mystery to expound  
There needs the help of thy sagacious soul.

MED. Inform me what the oracle pronounced,  
If I may hear it.

ÆG. "The projecting foot,  
Thou, of the vessel must not dare to loose"—

MED. Till you do what, or to what region come?

ÆG. "Till thou return to thy paternal lares."

MED. But what are you in need of, that you steer  
Your bark to Corinth's shores?

ÆG. A king, whose name  
Is Pittheus, o'er Trœzene's realm presides.

MED. That most religious man, they say, is son  
Of Pelops.

ÆG. I with him would fain discuss  
The god's prophetic voice.

MED. For he is wise,  
And in this science long hath been expert.

ÆG. Dearest to me of those with whom I formed  
A league of friendship in the embattled field.

MED. But, O may you be happy, and obtain  
All that you wish for.

ÆG. Why those downcast eyes,  
That wasted form?

MED. O Ægeus, he I wedded  
To me hath proved of all mankind most base.

ÆG. What mean'st thou? In plain terms thy grief declare.

MED. Jason hath wronged me, though without a cause.

ÆG. Be more explicit, what injurious treatment  
Complain'st thou of?

MED. To me hath he preferred  
Another wife, the mistress of this house.

ÆG. Dared he to act so basely?

MED. Be assured  
That I, whom erst he loved, am now forsaken.

ÆG. What amorous passion triumphs o'er his soul?  
Or doth he loathe thy bed?

MED. 'Tis mighty love,  
That to his first attachment makes him false.

ÆG. Let him depart then, if he be so void  
Of honour as thou sayst.

MED. He sought to form  
Alliance with a monarch.

ÆG. Who bestows  
On him a royal bride? Conclude thy tale.

MED. Creon, the ruler of this land.

ÆG. Thy sorrows  
Are then excusable.

MED. I am undone,  
And banished hence.

ÆG. By whom? There's not a word  
Thou utter'st but unfolds fresh scenes of woe.

MED. Me from this realm to exile Creon drives.

ÆG. Doth Jason suffer this? I cannot praise  
Such conduct.

MED. Not in words: though he submits  
Without reluctance. But I by that beard,  
And by those knees, a wretched suppliant, crave  
Your pity; see me not cast forth forlorn,

But to your realms and to your social hearth  
Receive me as a guest ; so may your  
For children be accomplished by the gods,  
And happiness your close of life attend.  
But how important a discovery Fortune  
To you here makes you are not yet apprised :  
For destitute of heirs will I permit you  
No longer to remain, but through my aid  
Shall you have sons, such potent drugs I know.

ÆG. Various inducements urge me to comply  
With this request, O woman ; first an awe  
For the immortal gods, and then the hope  
That I the promised issue shall obtain.  
On what my senses scarce can comprehend  
I will rely. O that thy arts may prove  
Effectual ! Thee, if haply thou arriv'st  
In my domain, with hospitable rites  
Shall it be my endeavour to receive,  
As justice dictates : but to thee, thus much  
It previouly behoves me to announce :  
I will not take thee with me from this realm ;  
But to my house if of thyself thou come  
Thou a secure asylum there shalt find,  
Nor will I yield thee up to any foe.  
But hence without my aid must thou depart,  
For I, from those who in this neighbouring land  
Of Corinth entertain me as their guest,  
Wish to incur no censure.

MED.                        Your commands  
Shall be obeyed : but would you plight your faith  
That you this promise will to me perform,  
A noble friend in you shall I have found.

ÆG. Believ'st thou not? Whence rise these anxious doubts?

MED. In you I trust; though Pelias' hostile race  
And Creon's hate pursue me: but, if bound  
By the firm sanction of a solemn oath,  
You will not suffer them with brutal force  
To drag me from your realm, but having entered

Into such compact, and by every god  
Sworn to protect me, still remain a friend,  
Nor hearken to their embassies. My fortune  
Is in its wane, but wealth to them belongs.  
And an imperial mansion.

ÆG. In these words  
Hast thou expressed great forethought : but if thus  
Thou art disposed to act, I my consent  
Will not refuse; for I shall be more safe  
If to thy foes some plausible excuse  
I can allege, and thee more firmly stablish.  
But say thou first what gods I shall invoke.

MED. Swear by the earth on which we tread, the sun  
My grandsire, and by all the race of gods.

ÆG. What action, or to do or to forbear?

MED. That from your land you never will expel,  
Nor while you live consent that any foe  
Shall tear me thence.

ÆG. By earth, the radiant sun,  
And every god I swear, I to the terms  
Thou hast proposed will steadfastly adhere.

MED. This may suffice. But what if you infringe  
Your oath, what punishment will you endure?

ÆG. Each curse that can befall the impious man.

MED. Depart, and prosper: all things now advance  
In their right track, and with the utmost speed  
I to your city will direct my course,  
When I have executed those designs

I meditate, and compassed what I wish. [Exit ÆGEUS.

CHOR. But thee, O king, may Maia's wingéd son  
Lead to thy Athens; there mayst thou attain  
All that thy soul desires, for thou to me,  
O Ægeus, seem'st most generous.

MED. Awful Jove,  
Thou too, O Justice, who art ever joined  
With thundering Jove, and bright Hyperion's beams,  
You I invoke. Now, O my friends, o'er those  
I hate shall we prevail: 'tis the career  
Of victory that we tread, and I at length

Have hopes the strictest vengeance on my foes  
To execute : for where we most in need  
Of a protector stood, appeared this stranger,  
The haven of my counsels : we shall fix  
Our cables to this poop, soon as we reach  
That hallowed city where Minerva reigns.  
But now to you the whole of my designs  
Will I relate ; look not for such a tale  
As yields delight : some servant will I send  
An interview with Jason to request,  
And on his coming, in the softest words  
Address him ; say these matters are well pleasing  
To me, and in the strongest terms applaud  
That marriage with the daughter of the king,  
Which now the traitor celebrates ; then add,  
“ ’Tis for our mutual good, ’tis rightly done.”  
But the request which I intend to make  
Is that he here will let my children stay ;  
Not that I mean to leave them thus behind,  
Exposed to insults in a hostile realm  
From those I hate ; but that my arts may slay  
The royal maid : with presents in their hands,  
A vesture finely wrought and golden crown,  
Will I despatch them ; these they to the bride  
Shall bear, that she their exile may reverse :  
If these destructive ornaments she take  
And put them on, both she, and every one  
Who touches her, shall miserably perish—  
My presents with such drugs I will anoint.  
Far as to this relates, here ends my speech.  
But I with anguish think upon a deed  
Of more than common horror, which remains  
By me to be accomplished : for my sons  
Am I resolved to slay, them from this arm  
Shall no man rescue. When I thus have filled  
With dire confusion Jason’s wretched house,  
I, from this land, yet reeking with the gore  
Of my dear sons, will fly, and having dared  
A deed most impious. For the scornful taunts

Of those we hate are not to be endured,  
Happen what may. Can life be any gain  
To me who have no country left, no home,  
No place of refuge? Greatly did I err  
When I forsook the mansions of my sire,  
Persuaded by the flattery of that Greek  
Whom I will punish, if just Heaven permit.  
For he shall not again behold the children  
I bore him while yet living. From his bride  
Nor shall there issue any second race,  
Since that vile woman by my baleful drugs  
Vilely to perish have the Fates ordained.  
None shall think lightly of me, as if weak,  
Of courage void, or with a soul too tame,  
But formed by Heaven in a far different mould,  
The terror of my foes, and to my friends  
Benignant : for most glorious are the lives  
Of those who act with such determined zeal.

CHOR. Since thy design thus freely thou to us  
Communicat'st, I, through a wish to serve  
Thy interests, and a reverence for those laws  
Which all mankind hold sacred, from thy purpose  
Exhort thee to desist.

MED. This cannot be :  
Yet I from you, because ye have not felt  
Distress like mine, such language can excuse.

CHOR. Thy guiltless children wilt thou dare to slay?

MED. My husband hence more deeply shall I wound

CHOR. But thou wilt of all women be most wretched.

MED. No matter : all the counsels ye can give  
Are now superfluous. But this instant go  
And Jason hither bring ; for on your faith,  
In all things I depend ; nor these resolves  
Will you divulge if you your mistress love,  
And feel a woman's interest in my wrongs.

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

Heroes of Erectheus' race,  
To the gods who owe your birth,  
And in a long succession trace  
Your sacred origin from earth,  
Who on wisdom's fruit regale,  
Purest breezes still inhale,  
And behold skies ever bright,  
Wandering through those haunted glades  
Where fame relates that the Pierian maids,  
Soothing the soul of man with chaste delight,  
Taught Harmony to breathe her first enchanting tale.

## I. 2.

From Cephisus' amber tide,  
At the Cyprian queen's command,  
As sing the Muses, are supplied  
To refresh the thirsty land,  
Fragrant gales of temperate air ;  
While around her auburn hair,  
In a vivid chaplet twined  
Never-fading roses bloom  
And scent the champaign with their rich perfume,  
Love comes in unison with wisdom joined,  
Each virtue thrives if Beauty lend her fostering care.

## II. I.

For its holy streams renowned  
Can that city, can that state  
Where friendship's generous train are found  
Shelter thee from public hate,  
When, defiled with horrid guilt,  
Thou thy children's blood hast spilt ?  
Think on this atrocious deed  
Ere thy dagger aim the blow :  
Around thy knees our suppliant arms we throw ;  
O doom not, doom them not to bleed.



II. 2.

How can thy relentless heart  
All humanity disclaim,  
Thy lifted arm perform its part?  
Lost to a sense of honest shame,  
Canst thou take their lives away,  
And these guiltless children slay?  
Soon as thou thy sons shalt view,  
How wilt thou the tear restrain,  
Or with their blood thy ruthless hands distain,  
When prostrate they for mercy sue?

JASON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

JAS. I at your call am come ; for though such hate  
To me you bear, you shall not be denied  
In this request ; but let me hear what else  
You would solicit.

MED.

Jason, I of thee

Crave pardon for the hasty words I spoke ;  
Since just it were that thou shouldst bear my wrath,  
When by such mutual proofs of love our union  
Hath been cemented. For I reasoned thus,  
And in these terms reproached myself : " O wretch,  
Wretch that I am, what madness fires my breast ?  
Or why 'gainst those who counsel me aright  
Such fierce resentment harbour ? What just cause  
Have I to hate the rulers of this land,  
My husband too, who acts but for my good  
In his espousals with the royal maid,  
That to my sons he hence may add a race  
Of noble brothers ? Shall not I appease  
The tempest of my soul ? Why, when the gods  
Confer their choicest blessings, should I grieve ?  
Have not I helpless children ? Well I know  
That we are banished from Thessalia's realm  
And left without a friend." When I these thoughts  
Maturely had revolved, I saw how great  
My folly and how groundless was my wrath.

Now therefore I commend, now deem thee wise  
 In forming this connection for my sake :  
 But I was void of wisdom, or had borne  
 A part in these designs, the genial bed  
 Obsequiously attended, and with joy  
 Performed each menial office for the bride.  
 I will not speak in too reproachful terms  
 Of my own sex ; but we, weak women, are  
 What nature formed us ; therefore our defects  
 Thou must not imitate, nor yet return  
 Folly for folly. I submit and own  
 My judgment was erroneous, but at length  
 Have I formed better counsels. O my sons,  
 Come hither, leave the palace, from those doors  
 Advance, and in a soft persuasive strain  
 With me unite your father to accost,  
 Forget past enmity, and to your friends  
 Be reconciled, for 'twixt us is a league  
 Of peace established, and my wrath subsides.

[*The SONS of JASON and MEDEA enter.*

Take hold of his right hand. Ah me, how great  
 Are my afflictions oft as I revolve  
 A deed of darkness in my labouring soul !  
 How long, alas ! my sons, are ye ordained  
 To live, how long to stretch forth those dear arms ?  
 Wretch that I am ! how much am I disposed  
 To weep ! how subject to each fresh alarm !  
 For I at length desisting from that strife,  
 Which with your sire I rashly did maintain,  
 Feel gushing tears bedew my tender cheek.

CHOR. Fresh tears too from these eyes have forced  
 their way ;

And may no greater ill than that which now  
 We suffer, overtake us !

JAS.

I applaud

Your present conduct, and your former rage  
 Condemn not ; for 'tis natural that the race  
 Of women should be angry when their lord  
 For a new consort trucks them. But your heart  
 Is for the better changed, and you, though late,

At length acknowledge the resistless power  
Of reason ; this is acting like a dame  
Endued with prudence. But for you, my sons,  
Abundant safety your considerate sire  
Hath with the favour of the gods procured,  
For ye, I trust, shall with my future race  
Bear the first rank in this Corinthian realm,  
Advance to full maturity ; the rest,  
Aided by each benignant god, your father  
Shall soon accomplish. Virtuously trained up  
May I behold you at a riper age  
Obtain pre-eminence o'er those I hate.  
But, ha ! Why with fresh tears do you thus keep  
Those eyelids moist ? From your averted cheeks  
Why is the colour fled, or why these words  
Receive you not with a complacent ear ?

MED. Nothing : my thoughts were busied for these  
children.

JAS. Be of good courage, and for them depend  
On my protecting care.

MED. I will obey,  
Nor disbelieve the promise thou hast made :  
But woman, ever frail, is prone to shed  
Involuntary tears.

JAS. But why bewail  
With such deep groans these children ?

MED. Them I bore ;  
And that our sons might live, while to the gods  
Thou didst address thy vows, a pitying thought  
Entered my soul ; 'twas whether this could be.  
But of th' affairs on which thou com'st to hold  
This conference with me, have I told a part  
Already, and to thee will now disclose  
The sequel : since the rulers of this land  
Resolve to banish me, as well I know  
That it were best for me to give no umbrage,  
Or to the king of Corinth, or to thee,  
By dwelling here : because I to this house  
Seem to bear enmity, from these domains  
Will I depart : but urge thy suit to Creon,

That under thy paternal care our sons  
May be trained up, nor from this realm expelled.

JAS. Though doubtful of success, I yet am bound  
To make th' attempt.

MED. Thou rather shouldst enjoin  
Thy bride her royal father to entreat,  
That he these children's exile may reverse.

JAS. With pleasure ; and I doubt not but on her,  
If like her sex humane, I shall prevail.

MED. To aid thee in this difficult emprise  
Shall be my care, for I to her will send  
Gifts that I know in beauty far exceed  
The gorgeous works of man ; a tissued vest  
And golden crown the children shall present,  
But with the utmost speed these ornaments  
One of thy menial train must hither bring,  
For not with one, but with ten thousand blessings  
Shall she be gratified ; thee, best of men,  
Obtaining for the partner of her bed,  
And in possession of those splendid robes  
Which erst the sun my grandsire did bestow  
On his descendants : take them in your hands,  
My children, to the happy royal bride  
Instantly bear them, and in dower bestow,  
For such a gift as ought not to be scorned  
Shall she receive.

JAS. Why rashly part with these ?  
Of tissued robes or gold can you suppose  
The palace destitute ? These trappings keep,  
Nor to another give : for if the dame  
On me place real value, well I know  
My love she to all treasures will prefer.

MED. Speak not so hastily : the gods themselves  
By gifts are swayed, as fame relates ; and gold  
Hath a far greater influence o'er the souls  
Of mortals than the most persuasive words :  
With fortune, the propitious heavens conspire  
To add fresh glories to thy youthful bride,  
All here submits to her despotic sway.

But I my children's exile would redeem,  
 Though at the cost of life, not gold alone.  
 But these adjacent mansions of the king  
 Soon as ye enter, O ye little ones,  
 Your sire's new consort and my queen entreat  
 That ye may not be banished from this land :  
 At the same time these ornaments present,  
 For most important is it that these gifts  
 With her own hands the royal dame receive.  
 Go forth, delay not, and, if ye succeed,  
 Your mother with the welcome tidings greet.

[*Exeunt JASON and SONS.*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Now from my soul each hope is fled,  
 I deem those hapless children dead,  
     They rush to meet the wound :  
 Mistrustful of no latent pest  
 Th' exulting bride will seize the gorgeous vest,  
     Her auburn tresses crowned  
 By baleful Pluto, shall she stand,  
 And take the presents with an eager hand.

I. 2.

The splendid robe of thousand dyes  
 Will fascinate her raptured eyes,  
     And tempt her till she wear  
 The golden diadem, arrayed  
 To meet her bridegroom in th' infernal shade  
     She thus into the snare  
 Of death shall be surprised by fate,  
 Nor 'scape remorseless Atë's direful hate.

II. 1.

But as for thee whose nuptials bring  
 The proud alliance of a king,

'Midst dangers unespied  
 Thou madly rushing, aid'st the blow  
 Ordained by Heaven to lay thy children low,  
 And thy lamented bride:  
 O man, how little dost thou know  
 That o'er thy head impends severest woe !

## II. 2.

Thy anguish I no less bemoan,  
 No less for thee, O mother, groan,  
 Bent on a horrid deed,  
 Thy children who resolv'st to slay,  
 Nor fear'st to take their guiltless lives away.  
 Those innocents must bleed,  
 Because, disdainful of thy charms,  
 The husband flies to a new consort's arms.

## ATTENDANT, SONS, MEDEA, CHORUS.

ATT. Your sons, my honoured mistress, are set free  
 From banishment ; in her own hands those gifts  
 With courtesy the royal bride received ;  
 Hence have your sons obtained their peace.

MED.

No matter.

ATT. Why stand you in confusion, when befriended  
 By prosperous fortune ?

MED.

Ah !

ATT.

This harsh reception  
 Accords not with the tidings which I bring.

MED. Alas ! and yet again I say, alas !

ATT. Have I related with unconscious tongue  
 Some great calamity, by the fond hope  
 Of bearing glad intelligence misled ?

MED. For having told what thou hast told, no blame  
 To thee do I impute.

ATT.

But on the ground  
 Why fix those eyes, and shed abundant tears ?

MED. Necessity constrains me : for the gods  
 Of Erebus and I in evil hour  
 Our baleful machinations have devised.

ATT. Be of good cheer ; for in your children still  
Are you successful.

MED. — 'Midst the realms of night  
Others I first will plunge. Ah, wretched me !

ATT. Not you alone are from your children torn,  
Mortal you are, and therefore must endure  
Calamity with patience.

MED. I these counsels  
Will practise : but go thou into the palace,  
And for the children whatsoever to-day  
Is requisite, make ready. [EXIT ATTENDANT

(O my sons !

My sons ! ye have a city and a house  
Where, leaving hapless me behind, without  
A mother ye for ever shall reside.  
But I to other realms an exile go,  
Ere any help from you I could derive,  
Or see you blest ; the hymeneal pomp,  
The bride, the genial couch, for you adorn,  
And in these hands the kindled torch sustain.  
How wretched am I through my own perverseness ! -  
You, O my sons, I then in vain have nurtured,  
In vain have toiled, and, wasted with fatigue,  
Suffered the pregnant matron's grievous throes.  
On you, in my afflictions, many hopes  
I founded erst : that ye with pious care  
Would foster my old age, and on the bier  
Extend me after death—much envied lot  
Of mortals ; but these pleasing anxious thoughts  
Are vanished now ; for, losing you, a life  
Of bitterness and anguish shall I lead.  
But as for you, my sons, with those dear eyes  
Fated no more your mother to behold,  
Hence are ye hastening to a world unknown.  
Why do ye gaze on me with such a look  
Of tenderness, or wherefore smile ? for these  
Are your last smiles. Ah wretched, wretched me !  
What shall I do ? My resolution fails.  
Sparkling with joy now I their looks have seen,

My friends, I can no more. To those past schemes  
 I bid adieu, and with me from this land  
 My children will convey. Why should I cause  
 A twofold portion of distress to fall  
 On my own head, that I may grieve the sire  
 By punishing his sons? This shall not be:  
 Such counsels I dismiss. But in my purpose  
 What means this change? Can I prefer derision,  
 And with impunity permit the foe  
 To 'scape? My utmost courage I must rouse:  
 For the suggestion of these tender thoughts  
 Proceeds from an enervate heart. My sons,  
 Enter the regal mansion. [*Exeunt* SONS.]

As for those

Who deem that to be present were unholy  
 While I the destined victims offer up,  
 Let them see to it. This uplifted arm  
 Shall never shrink. Alas! alas! my soul  
 Commit not such a deed. Unhappy woman,  
 Desist and spare thy children; we will live  
 Together, they in foreign realms shall cheer  
 Thy exile. No, by those avenging fiends  
 Who dwell with Pluto in the realms beneath,  
 This shall not be, nor will I ever leave  
 My sons to be insulted by their foes.  
 They certainly must die; since then they must,  
 I bore and I will slay them: 'tis a deed  
 Resolved on, nor my purpose will I change.  
 Full well I know that now the royal bride  
 Wears on her head the magic diadem,  
 And in the variegated robe expires:  
 But, hurried on by fate, I tread a path  
 Of utter wretchedness, and them will plunge  
 Into one yet more wretched. To my sons  
 Fain would I say: "O stretch forth your right hands,  
 Ye children, for your mother to embrace.  
 O dearest hands, ye lips to me most dear,  
 Engaging features and ingenuous looks,  
 May ye be blest, but in another world;



For by the treacherous conduct of your sire  
Are ye bereft of all this earth bestowed.  
Farewell, sweet kisses—tender limbs, farewell !  
And fragrant breath ! I never more can bear  
To look on you, my children.” My afflictions  
Have conquered me ; I now am well aware  
What crimes I venture on : but rage, the cause  
Of woes most grievous to the human race,  
Over my better reason hath prevailed.

CHOR. In subtle questions I full many a time  
Have heretofore engaged, and this great point  
Debated, whether woman should extend  
Her search into abstruse and hidden truths.  
But we too have a Muse, who with our sex  
Associates to expound the mystic lore  
Of wisdom, though she dwell not with us all.  
Yet haply a small number may be found,  
Among the multitude of females, dear  
To the celestial Muses. I maintain,  
They who in total inexperience live,  
Nor ever have been parents, are more happy  
Than they to whom much progeny belongs.  
Because the childless, having never tried  
Whether more pain or pleasure from their offspring  
To mortals rises, 'scape unnumbered toils.  
But I observe that they, whose fruitful house  
Is with a lovely race of infants filled,  
Are harassed with perpetual cares ; how first  
To train them up in virtue, and whence leave  
Fit portions for their sons ; but on the good  
Or worthless, whether they these toils bestow  
Remains involved in doubt. I yet must name  
One evil the most grievous, to which all  
The human race is subject ; some there are  
Who for their sons have gained sufficient wealth,  
Seen them to full maturity advance,  
And decked with every virtue, when, by fate  
If thus it be ordained, comes death unseen  
And hurries them to Pluto's gloomy realm.

Can it be any profit to the gods  
To heap the loss of children, that one ill  
Than all the rest more bitter, on mankind ?

MED. My friends, with anxious expectation long  
Here have I waited, from within to learn  
How fortune will dispose the dread event.  
But one of Jason's servants I behold  
With breathless speed advancing : his looks show  
That he some recent mischief would relate.

MESSENGER, MEDEA, CHORUS.

MES. O thou, who impiously hast wrought a deed  
Of horror, fly, Medea, from this land,  
Fly with such haste as not to leave the bark  
Or from the car alight.

MED. What crime, to merit  
A banishment like this, have I committed ?

MES. By thy enchantments is the royal maid  
'This instant dead, and Creon, too, her sire.

MED. Most glorious are the tidings you relate :  
Henceforth shall you be numbered with my friends  
And benefactors.

MES. Ha ! what words are these ?  
Dost thou preserve thy senses yet entire ?  
O woman, hath not madness fired thy brain ?  
The wrongs thou to the royal house hast done  
Hear'st thou with joy, nor shudder'st at the tale ?

MED. Somewhat I have in answer to your speech :  
But be not too precipitate, my friend ;  
Inform me how they died, for twofold joy  
Wilt thou afford, if wretchedly they perished.

MES. When with their father thy two sons arrived  
And went into the mansion of the bride,  
We servants, who had shared thy griefs, rejoiced ;  
For a loud rumour instantly prevailed  
That all past strife betwixt thy lord and thee  
Was reconciled. Some kissed the children's hands,  
And some their auburn tresses. I with joy  
To those apartments where the women dwell

Attended them. Our mistress, the new object  
 Of homage such as erst to thee was paid,  
 Ere she beheld thy sons on Jason cast  
 A look of fond desire : but then she veiled  
 Her eyes, and turned her pallid cheeks away  
 Disgusted at their coming, till his voice  
 Appeased her anger with these gentle words :  
 " O be not thou inveterate 'gainst thy friends,  
 But lay aside disdain, thy beauteous face  
 Turn hither, and let amity for those  
 Thy husband loves still warm that generous breast.  
 Accept these gifts, and to thy father sue,  
 That, for my sake, the exile of my sons  
 He will remit." Soon as the princess saw  
 Thy glittering ornaments, she could resist  
 No longer, but to all her lord's requests  
 Assented, and before thy sons were gone  
 Far from the regal mansion with their sire,  
 The vest, resplendent with a thousand dyes,  
 Put on, and o'er her loosely floating hair  
 Placing the golden crown, before the mirror  
 Her tresses braided, and with smiles surveyed  
 Th' inanimated semblance of her charms :  
 Then rising from her seat across the palace  
 Walked with a delicate and graceful step,  
 In the rich gifts exulting, and oft turned  
 Enraptured eyes on her own stately neck,  
 Reflected to her view : but now a scene  
 Of horror followed ; her complexion changed,  
 And she reeled backward, trembling every limb ;  
 Scarce did her chair receive her as she sunk  
 In time to save her falling to the ground.  
 One of her menial train, an aged dame,  
 Possessed with an idea that the wrath  
 Either of Pan or of some god unknown  
 Her mistress had invaded, in shrill tone  
 Poured forth a vow to Heaven, till from her mouth  
 She saw foam issue, in their sockets roll  
 Her wildly glaring eyeballs, and the blood

Leave her whole frame ; a shriek, that differed far  
From her first complaints, then gave she. In an instant  
This to her father's house, and that to tell  
The bridegroom the mischance which had befallen  
His consort, rushed impetuous ; through the dome  
The frequent steps of those who to and fro  
Ran in confusion did resound. But soon  
As the fleet courser at the goal arrives,  
She who was silent, and had closed her eyes,  
Roused from her swoon, and burst forth into groans  
Most dreadful, for 'gainst her two evils warred :  
Placed on her head the golden crown poured forth  
A wondrous torrent of devouring flames,  
And the embroidered robes, thy children's gifts,  
Preyed on the hapless virgin's tender flesh ;  
Covered with fire she started from her seat  
Shaking her hair, and from her head the crown  
With violence attempting to remove,  
But still more firmly did the heated gold  
Adhere, and the fanned blaze with double lustre  
Burst forth as she her streaming tresses shook :  
Subdued by fate, at length she to the ground  
Fell prostrate : scarce could any one have known her  
Except her father ; for those radiant eyes  
Dropped from their sockets, that majestic face  
Its wonted features lost, and blood with fire  
Ran down her head in intermingled streams,  
While from her bones the flesh, like weeping pitch,  
Melted away, through the consuming power  
Of those unseen enchantments ; 'twas a sight  
Most horrible : all feared to touch the corpse,  
For her disastrous end had taught us caution.  
Meanwhile her hapless sire, who knew not aught  
Of this calamity, as he with haste  
Entered the palace, stumbled o'er her body ;  
Instantly shrieking out, then with his arms  
Infolded, kissed it oft, and, " O my child,  
My wretched child," exclaimed ; " what envious god,  
Author of thy dishonourable fall,

Of thee bereaves an old decrepit man  
Whom the grave claims? With thee I wish to die,  
My daughter." Scarcely had the hoary father  
These lamentations ended; to uplift  
His feeble body striving, he adhered  
(As ivy with its pliant tendrils clings  
Around the laurel) to the tissued vest.  
Dire was the conflict; he to raise his knee  
From earth attempted, but his daughter's corse  
Still held him down, or if with greater force  
He dragged it onward, from his bones he tore  
The aged flesh: at length he sunk, and breathed  
In agonizing pangs his soul away;  
For he against such evil could bear up  
No longer. To each other close in death  
The daughter and her father lie: their fate  
Demands our tears. Warned by my words, with haste  
From this domain convey thyself, or vengeance  
Will overtake thee for this impious deed.  
Not now for the first time do I esteem  
Human affairs a shadow. Without fear  
Can I pronounce, they who appear endued  
With wisdom, and most plausibly trick out  
Specious harangues, deserve to be accounted  
The worst of fools. The man completely blest  
Exists not. Some in overflowing wealth  
May be more fortunate, but none are happy.

CHOR. Heaven its collected store of evil seems  
This day resolved with justice to pour down  
On perjured Jason. Thy untimely fate  
How do we pity, O thou wretched daughter  
Of Creon, who in Pluto's mansions go'st  
To celebrate thy nuptial feast.

MED. My friends,  
I am resolved, as soon as I have slain  
My children, from these regions to depart,  
Nor through inglorious sloth will I abandon  
My sons to perish by detested hands;  
They certainly must die: since then they must,

I bore and I will slay them. O my heart !  
 Be armed with tenfold firmness. What avails it  
 To loiter, when inevitable ills  
 Remain to be accomplished? Take the sword,  
 And, O my hand, on to the goal that ends  
 Their life, nor let one intervening thought  
 Of pity or maternal tenderness  
 Suspend thy purpose : for this one short day  
 Forget how fondly thou didst love thy sons,  
 How bring them forth, and after that lament  
 Their cruel fate : although thou art resolved  
 To slay, yet hast thou ever held them dear.  
 But I am of all women the most wretched.

[Exit MEDEA.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Earth, and thou sun, whose fervid blaze  
 From pole to pole illumines each distant land,  
 View this abandoned woman, ere she raise  
 Against her children's lives a ruthless hand ;  
 For from thy race, divinely bright,  
 They spring, and should the sons of gods be slain  
 By man, 'twere dreadful. O restrain  
 Her fury, thou celestial source of light,  
 Ere she with blood pollute your regal dome,  
 Chased by the demons hence let this Erinny's roam.

II.

The pregnant matron's throes in vain  
 Hast thou endured, and borne a lovely race,  
 O thou, who o'er th' inhospitable main,  
 Where the Cyanean rocks scarce leave a space,  
 Thy daring voyage didst pursue.  
 Why, O thou wretch, thy soul doth anger rend,  
 Such as in murder soon must end ?  
 They who with kindred gore are stained shall rue  
 Their guilt inexpiable : full well I know  
 The gods will on this house inflict severest woe.

1st SON [*within.*] Ah me ! what can I do, or whither fly  
To 'scape a mother's arm ?

2nd SON [*within.*] I cannot tell :  
For, O my dearest brother, we are lost.

CHOR. Heard you the children's shrieks ? I O thou  
dame,  
Whom woes and evil fortune still attend,  
Will rush into the regal dome, from death  
Resolved to snatch thy sons.

1st SON [*within.*] We by the gods  
Conjure you to protect us in this hour  
Of utmost peril, for the treacherous snare  
Hath caught us, and we perish by the sword.

CHOR. Art thou a rock, O wretch, or steel, to slay  
With thine own hand that generous race of sons  
Whom thou didst bear ? I hitherto have heard  
But of one woman, who in ancient days  
Smote her dear children, Ino, by the gods  
With frenzy stung, when Jove's malignant queen  
Distracted from her mansion drove her forth.  
But she, yet reeking with the impious gore  
Of her own progeny, into the waves  
Plunged headlong from the ocean's craggy beach,  
And shared with her two sons one common fate.  
Can there be deeds more horrible than these  
Left for succeeding ages to produce ?  
Disastrous union with the female sex,  
How great a source of woes art thou to man !

JASON, CHORUS.

JAS. Ye dames who near the portals stand, is she  
Who hath committed these atrocious crimes,  
Medea, in the palace, or by flight  
Hath she retreated ? For beneath the ground  
Must she conceal herself, or, borne on wings,  
Ascend the heights of Ether, to avoid  
The vengeance due for Corinth's royal house.  
Having destroyed the rulers of the land,  
Can she presume she shall escape unhurt  
From these abodes ? But less am I concerned





And ruin me, a childless wretched man.  
Yet after you this impious deed have dared  
To perpetrate, still view the radiant sun  
And fostering earth: may vengeance overtake you.  
For I that reason have regained which erst  
Forsook me, when to the abodes of Greece  
I from your home, from a Barbarian realm,  
Conveyed you, to your sire a grievous bane,  
And the corrupt betrayer of that land  
Which nurtured you. Some envious god first roused  
Your evil genius from the shades of hell  
For my undoing: after you had slain  
Your brother at the altar, you embarked  
In the famed Argo. Deeds like these a life  
Of guilt commenced; with me in wedlock joined.  
You bore those sons, whom you have now destroyed  
Because I left your bed. No Grecian dame  
Would e'er have ventured on a deed so impious;  
Yet I to them preferred you for my bride:  
This was a hostile union, and to me  
The most destructive; for my arms received  
No woman, but a lioness more fell  
Than Tuscan Scylla. Vainly should I strive  
To wound you with reproaches numberless,  
For you are grown insensible of shame!  
Vile sorceress, and polluted with the blood  
Of your own children, perish—my hard fate  
While I lament, for I shall ne'er enjoy  
My lovely bride, nor with those sons, who owe  
To me their birth and nurture, ever hold  
Sweet converse. They, alas! can live no more.  
Utterly lost to their desponding sire.

MED. Much could I say in answer to this charge,  
Were not the benefits from me received,  
And thy abhorred ingratitude, well known  
To Jove, dread sire. Yet was it not ordained,  
Scorning my bed, that thou shouldst lead a life  
Of fond delight, and ridicule my griefs;  
Nor that the royal virgin thou didst wed,

Or Creon, who to thee his daughter gave,  
Should drive me from these regions unavenged.  
A lioness then call me if thou wilt,  
Or by the name of Scylla, whose abode  
Was in Etrurian caverns. For thy heart,  
As justice prompted, in my turn I wounded.

JAS. You grieve, and are the partner of my woes.

MED. Be well assured I am : but what assuages  
My grief is this, that thou no more canst scoff.

JAS. How vile a mother, O my sons, was yours !

MED. How did ye perish through your father's lust !

JAS. But my right hand was guiltless of their death.

MED. Not so thy cruel taunts, and that new marriage.

JAS. Was my new marriage a sufficient cause  
For thee to murder them ?

MED. Canst thou suppose  
Such wrongs sit light upon the female breast ?

JAS. On a chaste woman's ; but your soul abounds  
With wickedness.

MED. Thy sons are now no more,  
This will afflict thee.

JAS. O'er your head, alas !  
They now two evil geniuses impend.

MED. The gods know who these ruthless deeds began.

JAS. They know the hateful temper of your soul.

MED. In detestation thee I hold, and loathe  
Thy conversation.

JAS. Yours too I abhor ;  
But we with ease may settle on what terms  
To part for ever.

MED. Name those terms. Say how  
Shall I proceed ? For such my ardent wish.

JAS. Let me inter the dead, and o'er them weep.

MED. Thou shalt not. For their corpses with this hand  
Am I resolved to bury in the grove  
Sacred to awful Juno, who protects  
The citadel of Corinth, lest their foes  
Insult them, and with impious rage pluck up  
The monumental stone. I in this realm

Of Sisyphus moreover will ordain  
A solemn festival and mystic rites,  
To make a due atonement for my guilt  
In having slain them. To Erechtheus' land  
I now am on my road, where I shall dwell  
With Ægeus, great Pandion's son ; but thou  
Shalt vilely perish as thy crimes deserve,  
Beneath the shattered relics of thy bark,  
The Argo, crushed ; such is the bitter end  
Of our espousals and thy faith betrayed.

JAS. May the Erinnys of our slaughtered sons,  
And justice, who requites each murderous deed,  
Destroy you utterly !

MED. Will any god  
Or demon hear thy curses, O thou wretch,  
False to thy oath, and to the sacred laws  
Of hospitality ?

JAS. Most impious woman,  
Those hands yet reeking with your children's gore—

MED. Go to the palace, and inter thy bride.

JAS. Bereft of both my sons, I thither go.

MED. Not yet enough lament'st thou : to increase  
Thy sorrows, mayst thou live till thou art old !

JAS. Ye dearest children.

MED. To their mother dear,  
But not to thee.

JAS. Yet them have you destroyed.

MED. That I might punish thee.

JAS. One more fond kiss  
On their loved lips, ah me ! would I imprint.

MED. Now wouldst thou speak to them, and in thine arms  
Clasp those whom living thou didst banish hence.

JAS. Allow me, I conjure you by the gods,  
My children's tender bodies to embrace.

MED. Thou shalt not : these presumptuous words in vain  
By thee were hazarded.

JAS. Jove, hear'st thou this,  
How I with scorn am driven away, how wronged  
By that detested lioness, whose fangs

Have slain her children ? Yet shall my loud complaints,  
While here I fix my seat, if 'tis allowed,  
And this be possible, call down the gods  
To witness that you hinder me from touching  
My murdered sons, and paying the deceased  
Funereal honours. Would to Heaven I ne'er  
Had seen them born to perish by your hand !

CHOR. Throned on Olympus, with his sovereign nod,  
Jove unexpectedly performs the schemes  
Divine foreknowledge planned ; our firmest hopes  
Oft fail us : but the god still finds the means  
Of compassing what man could ne'er have looked for ;  
And thus doth this important business end.

# THE PHŒNICIAN DAMSELS.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

JOCASTA.  
ATTENDANT.  
ANTIGONE.  
CHORUS OF PHŒNICIAN DAMSELS.  
POLYNICES.  
ETEOCLES.

CREON.  
MENŒCEUS.  
TIRESIAS.  
MESSENGER.  
ANOTHER MESSENGER.  
ŒDIPUS.

SCENE—AN OPEN COURT BEFORE THE PALACE AT THEBES.

### JOCASTA.

O THOU, who through the starry heavens divid'st  
Thy path, and on a golden chariot sitt'st  
Exalted, radiant sun, beneath the hoofs  
Of whose swift steeds the fiery volumes roll,  
How inauspicious, o'er the Theban race  
Didst thou dart forth thy beams, the day when Cadmus  
Came to this land from the Phœnician coast.  
He erst obtained Harmonia for his bride,  
Daughter of Venus ; of their loves the fruit  
Was Polydorus, and from him, as fame  
Relates, descended Labdacus, the sire  
Of Laius. From Menæceus I derive  
My birth ; my brother Creon and myself  
From the same mother spring : but I am called  
Jocasta, 'twas the name my father gave ;  
Me royal Laius married ; but when long  
Our bed had proved unfruitful, he to search  
The oracle of Phœbus went, and sued  
To the prophetic god, that he our house  
Would cheer with an auspicious race of sons :

The god replied, "Beware, O thou who rul'st  
The martial Thebans, strive not to obtain  
A progeny against the will of Heaven :  
If thou beget a son, that son shall slay thee,  
And all thy household shall be plunged in blood."  
He overcome by lust, and flushed with wine,  
In an unguarded moment disobeyed :  
But I no sooner had brought forth the child,  
Than he, grown conscious of his foul offence  
Against Apollo's mandate, to his shepherds  
The new-born infant gave, in Juno's meads,  
And on Cithæron's hill, to be exposed,  
Maiming his feet with pointed steel, whence Greece  
Hath called him Œdipus. But they who fed  
The steeds of Polypus, soon taking up,  
Conveyed him to their home, and in the hands  
Of their kind mistress placed, she at her breast  
Nurtured my son, and artfully persuaded  
Her lord that she was mother to the boy :  
Soon as the manly beard his cheek o'erspread,  
Aware from his own knowledge, or informed  
Of the deceit, solicitous to learn  
Who were his parents, to Apollo's shrine  
He journeyed ; and at the same time was Laius,  
My husband, hastening hither, to inquire  
Whether the child he had exposed was dead.  
In Phocis, where two severed roads unite,  
They met : the charioteer of Laius cried  
In an imperious tone, "Give way to kings,  
Thou stranger" : yet the silent youth advanced,  
With inborn greatness fired, till o'er his feet  
Distained with gore the steel-hoofed coursers trod ;  
Hence (for what need have I to speak of aught  
That's foreign to my woes ?) th' unconscious son  
Slew his own father, seized the spoils, and gave  
To Polybus, who nurtured him, the car.  
But when with ruthless fangs the Sphynx laid waste  
The city, and my husband was no more,  
My brother Creon by the herald's voice

Proclaimed that whosoever could expound  
Th' enigma by that crafty virgin forged  
Should win me for his bride: that mystic clue  
The luckless Œdipus, my son, unravelled;  
Hence o'er this land appointed king, he gained  
For his reward a sceptre—wretched youth!—  
Unwittingly espousing me who bore him;  
Nor yet was I his mother then aware  
That we committed incest. I produced  
To my own son four children; two were males,  
Eteocles and Polynices, famed  
For martial prowess; daughters two, the one  
Her father called Ismene, but the first  
I named Antigone. Soon as he learned  
That I whom he had wedded was his mother,  
The miserable Œdipus, o'erwhelmed  
With woes accumulated, from their sockets  
Tore with a golden clasp his bleeding eyes.  
But since the beard o'ershaded my sons' cheeks,  
Their sire they in a dungeon have confined,  
—The memory of this sad event t' efface,  
For which they needed every subtle art.  
Within these mansions he still lives, but, sick  
With evil fortunes, on his sons pours forth  
The most unholy curses, that this house  
They by the sword may portion out. Alarmed  
Lest Heaven those vows accomplish if they dwell  
Together, they by compact have resolved  
The younger brother Polynices first  
A voluntary exile shall depart,  
And, with Eteocles remaining here  
To wield the sceptre of this realm, exchange  
His station year by year: but th' elder-born  
Since he was seated on the lofty throne  
Departs not thence, and from this land expels  
The injured Polynices, who, to Argos  
Repairing, with Adrastus hath contracted  
Most strict affinity, and hither brings  
A numerous squadron of heroic youths;

These bulwarks for their sevenfold gates renowned  
 E'en now in arms approaching, he demands  
 His father's sceptre, and an equal share  
 Of the domain. But I to end their strife  
 On Polynices have prevailed to come,  
 Under the sanction of a warrior's faith  
 And parley with his brother, ere the hosts  
 In battle join : the messenger I sent  
 Informs me he the summons will attend.  
 O thou who dwell'st amidst Heaven's lucid folds,  
 Save us, dread Jove, and reconcile my children :  
 For thou, if thou art wise, wilt ne'er permit  
 That one poor mortal should be always wretched.

[*Exit* JOCASTA.]

ANTIGONE, ATTENDANT.

ATT. O fair Antigone, illustrious blossom  
 Of your paternal house, since from your chamber  
 Your mother hath allowed you to come forth  
 At your request, and from these roofs behold  
 The Argive hosts, stay here, while I the road  
 Explore, lest in our passage, if we meet  
 Some citizen, malignant tongues should blame  
 Both me, the servant, who obey, and you  
 For giving such command. But their whole camp  
 Since I have searched, to you will I relate  
 All that these eyes have witnessed, and whate'er  
 I heard amidst the Argives, when, employed  
 By both your brothers, I 'twixt either host  
 Bore pledges of their compact. But these mansions  
 No citizen approaches : haste, ascend  
 Yon ancient stairs of cedar, and o'erlook  
 The spacious fields that skirt Ismenos' stream  
 And Dirce's fountains. What a host of foes !

ANT. Thy aged arm stretch forth, and, as I climb  
 The narrow height, my tottering steps sustain.

ATT. Give me your hand, for at a lucky hour  
 You mount the turret : the Pelasgian host  
 Is now in motion, and the troops divide.



ANT. Thou venerable daughter of Latona,  
Thrice sacred goddess, Hecate, how gleams  
With brazen armour the whole field around !

ATT. For Polynices to his native land  
Returns not like a man of little note,  
But comes in anger, by unnumbered steeds  
Attended, and the loudest din of arms.

ANT. Are the gates closed ? What barriers guard the walls  
Reared by Amphion's skill ?

ATT. Be of good cheer.  
The city is made safe within. But look  
At him who first advances, if you wish  
To know him.

ANT. By those snowy plumes distinguished,  
Before the ranks who marches in the van,  
With ease sustaining on his nervous arm  
That brazen shield ?

ATT. A general, royal maid.

ANT. Who is he ? In what country was he born,  
Old man, inform me, and what name he bears.

ATT. Mycene glories in the warrior's birth,  
But near the marsh of Lerna he resides ;  
His name's Hippomedon, a mighty chief.

ANT. Ah, with what pride, how terrible an aspect,  
How like an earthborn giant doth he move !  
His targe with stars is covered, and that air  
Resembles not the feeble race of man.

ATT. Behold you not the chief who Dirce's stream  
Is crossing !

ANT. In what different armour clad !  
But who is he ?

ATT. Tydeus, the noble son  
Of Œneus ; in embattled fields his breast  
With true Ætolian courage is inspired.

ANT. Is he, O veteran, husband to the sister  
Of Polynices' consort ? How arrayed  
In party-coloured mail, a half Barbarian !

ATT. All the Ætolians. O my daughter, armed  
With bucklers, can expertly hurl the lance.

ANT. But whence, old man, art thou assured of this ?

ATT. The various figures wrought upon the shields  
I noticed at the time I from the walls  
Went to your brother with the pledge of truce :  
When these I see, their wearers well I know.

ANT. But who is he who moves round Zethus' tomb,  
A youth with streaming ringlets, and with eyes  
Horribly glaring ?

ATT. He too is a chief.

ANT. What multitudes in burnished armour clad  
Follow his steps !

ATT. From Atalanta sprung.  
Parthenopæus is the name he bears.

ANT. May Dian, who o'er craggy mountain speeds,  
Attended by his mother, with her shafts  
Transpierce th' audacious youth who comes to sack  
My city !

ATT. These rash vows suppress, O daughter,  
For they with justice these domains invade,  
And therefore will the gods, I fear, discern  
Their better cause.

ANT. But where is he, whom Fate  
Decreed in evil hour from the same womb  
With me to spring ? Say, O thou dear old man,  
Where's Polynices ?

ATT. He beside the tomb  
Of Niobe's seven virgin daughters stands  
Close to Adrastus. See you him ?

ANT. I see him,  
But not distinctly ; I can just discern  
A faint resemblance of that kindred form,  
The image of that bosom. Would to heaven,  
Borne on the skirts of yonder passing cloud,  
Through the ethereal paths, I with these feet  
Could to my brother urge my swift career !  
Then would I fling my arms round the dear neck  
Of him who long hath been a wretched exile.  
How gracefully, in golden arms arrayed,  
Bright as Hyperion's radiant beams, he moves !

ATT. To fill your soul with joy, the chief, these doors,  
Secured by an inviolable truce,  
Anon will enter.

ANT. O thou aged man ;  
But who is he who on yon chariot, drawn  
By milk-white coursers, seated, guides the reins ?

ATT. The seer Amphiaraus, O royal maid,  
He bears the victims that with crimson tides  
Must drench the ground.

ANT. Encircled with a zone  
Of radiance, O thou daughter of the sun,  
Pale moon, who from his beams thy golden orb  
Illum'st, behold with what a steady thong  
And how discreetly he those coursers guides !  
But where is Capaneus, who proudly utters  
Against this city the most horrid threats ?

ATT. To these seven turrets each approach he marks,  
The walls from their proud summit to their base  
Measuring with eager eye.

ANT. Dread Nemesis,  
Ye too, O deep-toned thunderbolts of Jove,  
And livid flames of lightning : yours, 'tis yours  
To blast such arrogance. Is this the man  
Who vowed that he the captive Theban dames,  
In slavery plunged, would to Mycene lead,  
To Lerna, where the god of ocean fixed  
His trident, whence its waters bear the name  
Of Amyône ? But, O child of Jove,  
Diana, venerable queen, who bind'st  
Thy streaming tresses with a golden caul,  
Never may I endure the loathsome yoke  
Of servitude.

ATT. The royal mansion enter,  
O daughter, and beneath its roof remain  
In your apartment, since you have indulged  
Your wish, and viewed those objects you desired.  
A tumult in the city now prevails :  
The women to the palace rush in crowds,  
For the whole female sex are prone to slander,

And soon as they some slight occasion find,  
 On which malignant rumours they can ground,  
 Add many more : for on such baneful themes  
 To them is it delightful to converse.

[*Exeunt.*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

Borne from Phœnician shores I crossed the deep,  
 My tender years to Phœbus they consign  
     To sprinkle incense on his shrine,  
     And dwell beneath Parnassus' steep,  
     O'erspread with everlasting snow :  
     Our dashing oars were plied in haste  
 Through the Ionian wave, whose eddies flow  
 Round Sicily's inhospitable waste ;  
 Then vernal zephyrs breathed our sails around,  
 And Heaven's high-vaulted roof conveyed the murmuring  
     sound.

I. 2.

A chosen offering to the Delphic god,  
 I from my native city to this land,  
     Where aged Cadmus bore command,  
     Am come, obedient to the nod  
     Of those who from Agenor spring,  
     To the proud towers of Laius' race,  
 Our kindred governed by a kindred king.  
 Here stand I, like an image on its base,  
 Though destined to partake refined delights,  
 Bathe in Castalia's stream, and tend Apollo's rites.

III.

O mountain, from whose cloven height  
 There darts a double stream of light,  
 Oft on thy topmost ridge the Menades are seen.  
 And thou, each day distilling generous wine,  
 O plant of Bacchus, whose ripe clusters shine,  
     Blushing through the leaf's faint green ;  
 Ye caves, in which the Python lay,

And hills, from whence Apollo twanged his bow,  
 Around your heights o'erspread with snow,  
 'Midst my loved virgin comrades may I stray,  
 Each anxious fear expelling from my breast,  
 In the world's centre, that auspicious fane  
     The residence of Phœbus blest,  
 And bid adieu to Dirce's plain.

## II. 1.

But now before these walls doth Mars advance,  
 And brandish slaughter's flaming torch around ;  
     May Thebes ne'er feel the threatened wound,  
     For to a friend his friend's mischance  
     Is grievous as his own : each ill  
     That lights upon these sevenfold towers  
 With equal woe Phœnicia's realm must fill :  
 For Thebes I mourn ; since, of one blood with ours  
 From Io's loves this nation dates its birth,  
 Those sorrows I partake which vex my kindred earth.

## II. 2.

Thick as a wintry cloud that phalanx stands,  
 Whose gleaming shields portend the bloody fight,  
     The god of war with stern delight  
     Shall to the siege those hostile bands  
     Lead on, and rouse the fiends to smite  
     The race of an incestuous bed :  
 Much, O Pelasgian Argos, much thy might,  
 And more the vengeance of the gods I dread ;  
 For, armed with justice, on his native land  
 Rushes that banished youth, the sceptre to demand.

## POLYNICES. CHORUS.

POL. They who were stationed to observe the gates  
 Unbarred them, and with courtesy received me  
 As I the fortress entered : hence I fear  
 Lest, now they in their wily toils have caught,  
 They should detain and slay me ; I with eyes  
 Most vigilant must therefore look around  
 To guard 'gainst treachery : but the sword which arms

This hand shall give me courage. Ho ! who's there ?  
 Doth a mere sound alarm me ? All things seem,  
 E'en to the bravest, dreadful, when they march  
 O'er hostile ground. I in my mother placed  
 Firm confidence, yet hardly can I trust  
 Her who on me prevailed t' accept the pledge  
 And hither come. But I have near at hand  
 A sure asylum, for the blazing altars  
 Are not remote, nor yet is yonder house  
 Without inhabitants. Be sheathed my sword.  
 Those courteous nymphs who at the portals stand  
 I'll question. O ye foreign damsels, say,  
 What was the country whence to Greece ye came ?

CHOR. Phœnicia is my native land, I there  
 Was nurtured : but Agenor's martial race  
 Me, the first fruit of their victorious arms,  
 A votive offering to Apollo sent,  
 But to the venerable prophetic domes,  
 And blazing shrines of Phœbus, when the son  
 Of Œdipus prepared to have conveyed me,  
 The Argives 'gainst this city led their host.  
 Now in return inform me who thou art  
 Who com'st to Thebes, o'er whose seven gates are reared  
 As many turrets.

POL.                    Œdipus, the son  
 Of Laius, was my sire : Menœceus' daughter  
 Jocasta brought me forth ; the name I bear  
 Is Polynices.

CHOR.            O, illustrious king,  
 Thou kinsman to Agenor's race, my lords  
 By whom I was sent hither, at thy feet,  
 I as the usage of my country bids  
 Prostrate myself. Thou to thy native land  
 After a tedious absence art returned.  
 But ho ! come forth, thou venerable dame,  
 Open the doors ! O mother of the chief,  
 Hear'st thou my voice ? Why yet dost thou delay  
 To cross the lofty palace, and with speed  
 In thos' fond arms thy dearest son unfold ?

## JOCASTA, POLYNICES, CHORUS.

JOC. Within the palace. O Phœnician nymphs,  
Hearing your voice, I with a tardy step,  
Trembling through age, creep hither. O my son,  
At length I, after many days, once more  
Behold that face. Fling fling those arms around  
The bosom of your mother : those loved cheeks  
Let me embrace, and with your azure tresses,  
My neck o'ershadowing, mix my streaming hair.  
To these maternal arms you scarce return,  
Till hope and expectation both had failed.  
O how shall I accost you, how impart  
To my whole frame the transports of my soul,  
And all around me, wheresoe'er I turn,  
Bid pleasures past and distant years revive ?  
My son, you left this mansion of your sire  
A desert, by your haughty brother wronged  
And exiled from your country. By each friend  
How greatly hath your absence been bewailed !  
How greatly by all Thebes ! My hoary locks  
Hence did I sever from this aged head,  
Hence weeping utter many piteous notes,  
And, O my son, the tissued robes of white  
Which erst I wore, exchange for sable weeds,  
These loathed habiliments. Within the palace  
Your father, of his eyesight reft, bewails  
The disunited pillars of his house :  
Resolved to slay himself, he sometimes strives  
To rush on the drawn sword ; then searches round  
For the high beam to fix the gliding noose,  
Groaning forth imprecations 'gainst his son ;  
Thus, uttering with shrill tone his clamorous plaints.  
He lives, encompassed by perpetual night.  
But, ah ! my son, by wellock's strictest bonds  
United, I am told that you enjoy  
A foreign consort, in a foreign realm,  
To vex your mother's soul and the stern ghost  
Of Laius ; on such ill-assorted nuptials

Curses attend. The Hymeneal torch  
 I kindled not to grace your spousal rites,  
 As custom hath ordained, and it behoves  
 A happy mother; nor his cooling stream  
 To fill the laver did Ismenos yield;  
 Nor on th' arrival of thy royal bride  
 Through Thebes were festive acclamations heard.  
 Perish the cause of this unnatural war,  
 Be it or sword, or discord, of your sire,  
 Or fate, whose horrors revel in the house  
 Of Œdipus: for these disasters sting  
 My soul with anguish.

CHOR. Great endearments rise  
 From pangs maternal, and all women love  
 Their progeny.

POL. Amidst my foes I come,  
 O mother, whether wisely or unwisely,  
 Great are my doubts: but all men are constrained  
 To love their country. He who argues aught  
 Against a truth so clear in empty words  
 Takes pleasure, while his heart confutes his tongue.  
 Yet with such panic terror was I seized,  
 Lest by some stratagem my brother slay me,  
 That, bearing a drawn falchion in my hand,  
 I cast my eyes around on every side  
 As I the city traversed: my sole trust  
 Is in the truce he swore to, and thy faith,  
 Which led me to this mansion of my sire:  
 Yet as I came full many a tear I shed,  
 After long absence, to behold the palace,  
 The sacred altars of the gods, that ring  
 Where wrestlers strive, scene of my youthful sports,  
 And Dirce's fountain. Hence unjustly driven  
 I in a foreign city dwell, and steep  
 These eyes in tears incessant. But to add  
 Grief to my griefs, thee with thy tresses shorn  
 I see, and in a sable vest arrayed.  
 Wretch that I am! How dreadful and how hard  
 To reconcile, is enmity 'twixt those



Of the same house, O mother ! But how fares  
My aged sire within, whose eyes are closed  
In total darkness ? how, my sisters twain ?  
Bewail they not their exiled brother's fate ?

JOC. Some god hath smitten the devoted house  
Of Œdipus. I first 'gainst Heaven's decrees  
Brought forth a son, and in an evil hour  
Wedded that son, to whom your owe your birth.  
But wherefore should I dwell upon these scenes  
Of horror ? It behoves us to bear up  
Under the woes inflicted by the gods.  
How shall I ask the questions which I wish ?—  
Fearing to wound your soul—yet to propose them  
Is my desire most urgent.

POL. Question me,  
Leave nought unsaid : for, O my dearest mother,  
Whatever is thy pleasure will to me  
Seem grateful.

JOC. With what most I wish to know  
Will I begin my questions. Is not exile  
A grievous ill ?

POL. Most grievous, and indeed  
Worse than in name.

JOC. How happens this ? Whence rises  
The misery of the banished man ?

POL. He's subject  
To one severe calamity—he wants  
Freedom of speech.

JOC. The wretch of whom you talk,  
Who utters not his thoughts, is but a slave.

POL. The follies of their rulers they must bear.

JOC. This were a piteous doom, to be constrained  
To imitate th' unwise.

POL. If gain ensue,  
We must submit, though nature's voice forbid

JOC. Hopes, it is said, the hungry exile feed.

POL. With smiles they view him, but are slow to aid.

JOC. Doth not time prove their falsehood ?

POL. They possess

An influence equal to the Queen of Love ;  
They banish every sorrow from the breast.

JOC. But whence procured you food, ere you obtained  
A sustenance by wedlock ?

POL. For the day  
At times I had sufficient, but at times  
Was wholly destitute.

JOC. Your father's friends,  
And they who shared his hospitable board,  
Did they not aid you ?

POL. Be thou ever blest !  
For he who is unhappy hath no friend.

JOC. But did not your illustrious birth advance you  
To some exalted station ?

POL. A great curse  
Is poverty : this high descent with food  
Supplied me not.

JOC. To all mankind it seems  
Their native land's most dear.

POL. Words have not power  
T' express what love I for my country feel.

JOC. But why to Argos went you, what design  
Had you then formed ?

POL. Apollo to Adrastus  
Pronounced a certain oracle.

JOC. What mean you ?  
I cannot comprehend.

POL. That he in wedlock  
Should join his daughters to the boar and lion.

JOC. How did the names of these ferocious beasts  
Relate to you, my son ?

POL. I cannot tell.  
To this adventure was I called by fortune.

JOC. That goddess is discreet : but by what means  
Did you obtain your consort ?

POL. It was nigh  
When to Adrastus' vestibule I came.

JOC. To seek your lodging, like a banished vagrant ?

POL. E'en so : and there I met another exile.

JOC. Who was he ? Him most wretched too I deem.

POL. Tydeus, the son of Ceneus, I am told.

JOC. But wherefore did Adrastus to wild beasts  
Compare you?

POL. From our fighting for a den.

JOC. Did then the son of Talaus thus expound  
The oracles?

POL. And on us two bestowed  
His daughters.

JOC. But have these espousals proved  
Happy, or inauspicious?

POL. I have found  
No reason yet to curse the day I wedded.

JOC. Yet how prevailed you on a foreign host  
Hither to follow you?

POL. Adrastus sware  
To Tydeus and myself, his sons-in-law  
(Who now by strict affinity are joined),  
That both of us he in our native realms  
Will reinstate, but Polynices first.  
Unnumbered Argives and Mycene's chiefs  
Crowd to my banners, a lamented succour,  
But such as stern necessity demands,  
Affording: for my country I invade.  
Yet witness for me, O ye righteous gods.  
'Tis with reluctance that I wield the spear  
Against my dearest parents. But to thee,  
O mother, it belongs to end this strife,  
To reconcile two brothers, and to cause  
My toils, and thine, and those of Thebes, to cease.  
Indulge me while I quote an ancient maxim:  
"Of human honours riches are the source,  
And rule with power supreme the tribes of men."  
In quest of wealth I hither come, and lead  
Unnumbered squadrons to the dubious field,  
For indigent nobility is scorned.

CHOR. But lo! Eteocles himself repairs  
To th' appointed conference. In such terms  
As may restore peace 'twixt thy sons, be thine,  
Jocasta, the maternal task t' address them.

ETEOCLES, POLYNICES, JOCASTA, CHORUS.

ETE. With your request, O mother, to comply,  
Hither I come : but what must now be done ?  
Let others speak before me. For the squadrons  
I round the walls have marshalled, and restrained  
The ardour of the city, till I hear  
What terms of peace you would propose, what views  
Within these walls induced you to receive  
My brother, by the public faith secured,  
Extorting my consent.

JOC. Yet pause awhile ;  
For haste is incompatible with justice :  
But slow deliberations oft effect  
Such schemes as wisdom dictates. Lay aside  
Those threatening looks, that vehemence of soul ;  
For thou behold'st not the terrific head  
Lopped from Medusa's shoulders, but behold'st  
Thy brother coming. Your benignant eyes,  
O Polynices, on your brother turn,  
For while you look upon that kindred face  
You will speak better, and his words receive  
With more advantage. Fain would I suggest  
One act of wholesome prudence to you both ;  
An angered friend, when with his friend he meets,  
Should at such interview attend to nought  
But those pacific schemes on which he came,  
Their ancient broils forgetting. 'Tis incumbent  
On you, O Polynices, to speak first,  
Because, complaining of great wrongs, you lead  
An Argive army hither. May some god  
Judge 'twixt my sons, and reconcile their strife !

POL. Plain are the words of truth, and justice needs  
No subtlety t' interpret, for it bears  
Enough to recommend it : but injustice,  
Devoid of all internal worth, requires  
Each specious art. My father's house, my interests.  
His also, I consulted : and the curse  
Which Œdipus had erst pronounced against us,

Anxious to shun, from these domains retired  
 A voluntary exile, and to him  
 Surrendered up the sceptre for one year,  
 That in my turn I might be king, nor come,  
 With enmity and slaughter in my train,  
 Those mischiefs which from discord must ensue  
 To act or suffer. He, who to these terms  
 Assented, and for sanctions of his oath  
 Invoked the gods, hath not accomplished aught  
 Of his engagements, but still keeps the throne,  
 And o'er my portion of our father's realm  
 Without a colleague reigns. I, on receiving  
 My rights, e'en now am ready from this land  
 To send the troops, and in my palace rule  
 For an appointed time, then yield again  
 The empire to my brother, nor lay waste  
 My country, nor the scaling-ladder plant  
 Against yon turrets : yet will I attempt  
 To do all this, if justice be denied me.  
 I call the gods to witness these assertions :  
 That though each solemn contract on my part  
 Hath been performed, I from my native land  
 By lawless force am driven. I have collected  
 No specious words, O mother, to adorn  
 Truths which with equal force must strike the wise  
 And the illiterate, if I judge aright.

CHOR. To me, although I in a Grecian realm  
 Have not been nurtured, thou appear'st to speak  
 With much discretion.

ETE. . . . . If, in their ideas  
 Of excellence and wisdom, all concurred,  
 No strife had e'er perplexed the human race.  
 But now, among the tribes of men, are fit,  
 And right, and fair equality mere names,  
 In real life no longer to be found.  
 To you, O mother, I without concealment  
 Will speak my sentiments : I would ascend  
 The starry paths whence bursts the orient sun,  
 And plunge beneath the central earth, to win

Empire, the greatest of th' immortal powers.  
 I therefore will not yield up such a good  
 To any other, but for my own use  
 Retain it, O my mother : for of manhood  
 Devoid is he who tamely bears the loss  
 Of what he prizes most, and in its stead  
 Accepts some mean exchange. Yet more, it shames me  
 That he, who proudly comes with arms to lay  
 Our country waste, his wishes should obtain.  
 For this would be to Thebes a foul reproach,  
 If, trembling at Mycene's spear, I gave  
 To him my sceptre. Thus arrayed in mail  
 He ought not to negotiate terms of peace.  
 For all that by the sword our haughty foes  
 Hope to exact might gentle words procure.  
 If such his pleasure, he on other terms  
 Shall be permitted in this land to dwell ;  
 But never can I willingly forego  
 That one great object, nor, while sovereign power  
 Is yet within my reach, will I e'er stoop  
 To be his vassal : rather come, ye flames,  
 Ye falchions ; let the warrior steed be harnessed,  
 With brazen chariots cover all the field,  
 I never will surrender up my throne.  
 Since, if we must o'erleap the narrow bounds  
 Of justice, for an empire, to transgress  
 Were glorious ; we in every point beside  
 Are bound to act as virtue's rules enjoin.

CHOR. No ornaments of speech to evil deeds  
 Are due, for justice hates such borrowed charms.

JOC. Believe me, O Eteocles my son,  
 Old age is not by wretchedness alone  
 Attended : more discreetly than rash youth  
 Experience speaks. Why dost thou woo ambition,  
 That most malignant goddess ? O forbear !  
 For she's a foe to justice, and hath entered  
 Full many a mansion, many a prosperous city,  
 Nor left them till in ruin she involves  
 All those who harbour her : yet this is she

On whom thou doat'st. 'Twere better, O my son,  
To cultivate equality, who joins  
Friends, cities, heroes in one steadfast league;  
For by the laws of nature, through the world  
Equality was 'stablished : but the wealthy  
Finds in the poorer man a constant foe ;  
Hence bitter enmity derives its source.  
Equality, among the human race,  
Measures, and weights, and numbers hath ordained :  
Both the dark orb of night and radiant sun  
Their annual circuits equally perform ;  
Each, free from envy, to the other yields  
Alternately ; thus day and night afford  
Their services to man. Yet wilt not thou  
Be satisfied to keep an equal portion  
Of these domains, and to thy brother give  
His due. Where then is justice ? Such respect  
As sober reason disapproves, why pay'st thou  
To empire, to oppression crowned with triumph ?  
To be a public spectacle thou deem'st  
Were honourable. 'Tis but empty pride.  
When thou hast much already, why submit  
To toils unnumbered ? What's superfluous wealth  
But a mere name ? Sufficient to the wise  
Is competence : for man possesses nought  
Which he can call his own. Though for a time  
What bounty the indulgent gods bestow  
We manage, they resume it at their will :  
Unstable riches vanish in a day.  
Should I to thee th' alternative propose  
Either to reign, or save thy native land,  
Couldst thou reply that thou hadst rather reign ?  
But if he conquer, and the Argive spears  
O'erpower the squadrons who from Cadmus spring,  
Thou wilt behold Thebes taken, wilt behold  
Our captive virgins ravished by the foe :  
That empire which thou seek'st will prove the bane  
Of thy loved country ; yet thou still persist'st  
In mischievous ambition's wild career.

Thus far to thee. And now to you I speak,  
 O Polynices; favours most unwise  
 Are those Adrastus hath on you bestowed,  
 And with misjudging fury are you come  
 To spread dire havoc o'er your native land.  
 If you (which may the righteous gods avert !)  
 This city take, how will you rear the trophies  
 Of such a battle? How, when you have laid  
 Your country waste, th' initiatory rites  
 Perform, and slay the victims? On the banks  
 Of Inachus displayed, with what inscription  
 Adorn the spoils—"From blazing Thebes these shields  
 Hath Polynices won, and to the gods  
 Devoted"? Never, O my son, through Greece  
 May you obtain such glory. But if you  
 Are vanquished and Eteocles prevail,  
 To Argos, leaving the ensanguined field  
 Strewn with unnumbered corpses of the slain,  
 How can you flee for succour? 'Twill be said  
 By some malignant tongue: "A curst alliance  
 Is this which, O Adrastus, thou hast formed:  
 We to the nuptials of one virgin owe  
 Our ruin." You are hastening, O my son,  
 Into a twofold mischief: losing all  
 That you attempt, and causing your brave friends  
 To perish. O my sons, this wild excess  
 Of rage, with joint concurrence, lay aside.  
 By equal folly when two chiefs inspired  
 To battle rush, dire mischief must ensue.

CHOR. Avert these woes, and reconcile the sons  
 Of Ædipus, ye gods.

ETE. No strife of words  
 Is ours, O mother; we but waste the time,  
 And all your care avails not. For no peace  
 Can we conclude on any other terms  
 Than those already named—that I, still wielding  
 The sceptre, shall be monarch of this land:  
 Then leave me to myself, and cease to urge  
 These tedious admonitions. As for thee,



O Polynices, from these walls depart,  
Or thou shalt die.

POL. By whom? Who can be found  
Invulnerable enough, with reeking sword  
To strike me dead, yet 'scape the self-same fate?

ETE. Beside thee, and not distant far he stands.  
Seest thou this arm?

POL. I see it: but wealth makes  
Its owners timid, and too fond of life.

ETE. Art thou come hither with a numerous host  
'Gainst him thou count'st a dastard in the field?

POL. A cautious general's better than a bold.

ETE. Thou on that compact, which preserves thy life,  
Too haughtily presum'st.

POL. Again I claim  
The sceptre and my portion of this realm.

ETE. Ill-founded is thy claim, for I will dwell  
In my own house.

POL. Retaining to yourself  
More than your share?

ETE. The words which I pronounce  
Are these: Depart thou from the Theban land.

POL. Ye altars of my loved paternal gods—

ETE. Which thou art come to plunder—

POL. Hear my voice.

ETE. What deity will hear thee, 'gainst thy country  
While thus thou wagest war?

POL. And ye abodes  
Of those two gods on milk-white coursers borne.

ETE. Who hate thee.

POL. From the mansions of my sire  
Am I expelled.

ETE. Because thou hither cam'st  
Those mansions to destroy.

POL. Thence was I driven  
With foul injustice. O ye powers divine!

ETE. Go to Mycene; there, and not at Thebes,  
Invoke the gods.

POL. You trample on the laws.

ETE. Yet am not I, like thee, my country's foe.

POL. Reft of my portion, while you drive me forth  
An exile.

ETE. Thee moreover will I slay.

POL. Hear'st thou what wrongs, my father, I endure?

ETE. Thy actions too have reached his ears.

POL. And you,  
My mother.

ETE. Thou thy mother canst not name  
Without a profanation.

POL. O thou city!

ETE. To Argos haste, and there invoke the pool  
Of Lerna.

POL. I depart: forbear to grieve  
For me, O mother, but accept my praise.

ETE. From these domains avaunt!

POL. Before I go,  
Permit me to behold our sire.

ETE. Thou shalt not  
Obtain this boon.

POL. My virgin sisters then.

ETE. Them, too, thou ne'er shalt see.

POL. Alas! dear sisters!

ETE. Why nam'st thou those to whom thou art most  
hateful?

POL. Joy to my mother!

JOC. Have I any cause  
For joy, my son?

POL. No longer am I yours.

JOC. Full many and most grievous are my woes.

POL. Because he wrongs me.

ETE. Equal are the wrongs  
I suffer.

POL. Where will you your station take  
Before yon turrets?

ETE. For what purpose ask  
This question?

POL. I in battle am resolved  
To meet and slay you.

ETE. The same wish now fires  
My inmost soul.

JOC. Alas ! my sons, what mean ye ?

ETE. The fact itself must show.

JOC. Will ye not shun  
The curses of your sire ?

ETE. Perdition seize  
On our whole house ! Soon shall my sword, embued  
With gore, no longer in its scabbard rest.

[*Exit* JOCASTA.]

POL. Thou soil which nurtured me, and every god,  
Bear witness, that with insults and with wrongs  
O'erwhelmed I from my country, like a slave,  
Not like the son of Œdipus, am driven.  
•Whate'er thou suffer, O thou city, blame,  
Not me, but him : for I was loth t' invade  
This land, and with reluctance now depart.  
Thou too, O Phœbus, mighty king, who guard'st  
These streets, ye palaces, my youthful comrades,  
Farewell ! and, O ye statues of the gods,  
Drenched with the blood of victims !—for I know not  
Whether I ever shall accost you more.  
But hope yet sleeps not, and in her I place  
My trust, that with Heaven's aid I shall enjoy  
The Theban realm, when I have slain this boaster.

[*Exit* POLYNICES.]

ETE. Leave these domains : a forethought by the gods  
Inspired, my father prompted, when on thee  
The name of Polynices, to denote  
Abundance of contention, he bestowed.

[*Exit* ETEOCLES.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Erst to this land the Tyrian Cadmus came,  
When at his feet a heifer lay,  
Who in the meads unyoked was wont to stray,  
Fulfilling Heaven's response, well known to fame,  
And marked the spot where he should dwell :

The oracle announced this fruitful ground  
 For his abode, where, from her limpid well,  
 Fair Dirce spreads a cooling stream around,  
 And on her banks are vernal blossoms found :

Compressed by amorous Jove  
 Here Semele the ruddy Bromius bore,  
 Whom ivy with luxuriant tendrils strove  
 In infancy to mantle o'er  
 And round his happy brows to spread.  
 Hence, in bacchanalian dance,  
 With light and wanton tread  
 The Theban nymphs advance,  
 And matrons all their cares resign,  
 Gay votaries to the god of wine.

## II.

Mars at the fount its ruthless guardian placed,  
 On scaly folds a dragon rode,  
 Wild glared his eyes, in vain the waters flowed,  
 Nor dared the thirsting passenger to taste ;  
 Advancing with undaunted tread  
 To draw libations for the powers divine,  
 A ponderous stone full on the monster's head  
 Cadmus discharged, then seized and pierced his chine  
 With frequent wounds ; so Pallas did enjoin:

This done, the teeth he sowed,  
 And instantly, dire spectacle, a train,  
 All clad in mail, on earth's torn surface glowed ;  
 Soon was each hardy warrior slain,  
 And to the soil which gave him birth  
 Joined once more : a crimson flood  
 Moistened the lap of earth ;  
 By parching winds their blood  
 Was visited, and still remain  
 Its marks on the discoloured plain.

## III.

To thee, O Epaphus, the child of Jove,  
 Sprung from our grandame Io's love,  
 I cried in a barbaric strain ;

O visit, visit this once favoured plain  
 Which thy descendants call their own.  
 Two goddesses by countless votaries known,  
 Proserpina, dread queen, who from our birth  
 Conducts us to the tomb, with Ceres the benign,  
 E'en she whose foodful shrine  
 Is thronged by every denizen of earth,  
 From earliest days this realm possessed ;  
 With lambent glories on their front displayed,  
 O send them to its aid ;  
 Nought can withstand a god's request.

ETEOCLES, CHORUS.

ETE. [*to one of his ATTENDANTS.*] Go thou, and hither  
 bring Menæceus' son,  
 Creon, the noble brother of Jocasta,  
 My mother ; tell him, on my own affairs,  
 And on the public interests of the state,  
 With him I would consult, ere host opposed  
 To host in battle meet and launch the spear.  
 But lo ! he is at hand to spare thy feet  
 The toil of this their errand : I behold him  
 Approach the palace.

CREON, ETEOCLES, CHORUS.

CRE. I to every gate  
 And every sentinel, my royal lord,  
 Have gone in quest of you.

ETE. Thee, too, I longed,  
 O Creon, to behold : for I have found  
 Treaties for peace all fruitless since I spoke  
 With Polynices.

CRE. He, I hear, looks down  
 With scorn on Thebes, trusting in his ally  
 Adrastus, and that numerous Argive host.  
 But we to the decision of the gods  
 Must now refer. Most urgent are th' affairs  
 Of which I come to tell.

ETE. What means my friend ?  
 Thy words I comprehend not.

CRE. From the camp  
Of Argos a deserter came.

ETE. To bring  
Some recent tidings of what passes there?

CRE. Their host, he says, arrayed in glittering mail,  
Will instantly besiege the Theban towers.

ETE. The valiant race of Cadmus from these gates  
Must sally forth, to guard their native land.

CRE. What mean you? Sees not your impetuous youth  
Our strength in a false light?

ETE. Without the trenches,  
To show that we are ready for the combat.

CRE. Few are the Theban squadrons, but the number  
Of theirs is great.

ETE. In words I know them brave.

CRE. The fame of Argos through all Greece resounds.

ETE. Be of good cheer; I with their corpses soon  
These fields will cover.

CRE. With your wishes mine  
Concur: but I foresee that such emprise  
Abounds with heaviest dangers.

ETE. Be assured  
I will not coop my host within the walls.

CRE. On prudent counsels our success depends.

ETE. Wouldst thou persuade me therefore to attempt  
Some other method?

CRE. Ere you risk our fate  
On one decisive battle, have recourse  
To all expedients.

ETE. What if I rush forth  
From ambush, and encounter them by night?

CRE. Could you return, if worsted, and take shelter  
Within these walls?

ETE. Night to both hosts affords  
The same impediments; but they fare best  
Who give th' assault.

CRE. 'Tis terrible to rush  
On danger 'midst the thickest clouds of darkness.

ETE. Shall I then launch the javelin, while they sit  
Around the genial board?

CRE. This might alarm them :  
Our business is to conquer.

ETE. Dirce's channel,  
Which they must cross in their retreat, is deep.

CRE. All schemes you can propose are less expedient  
Than if you with a prudent caution act.

ETE. But what if we with cavalry attack  
The Argive camp ?

CRE. On every side the host  
With chariots is secured.

ETE. What then remains  
For me to do ? Must I surrender up  
This city to our foes ?

CRE. Not thus ; exert  
Your wisdom, and deliberate.

ETE. What precaution,  
Think'st thou, were most discreet ?

CRE. I am informed  
They have seven champions.

ETE. What's the task assigned  
For them t' effect ? Their strength can be but small.

CRE. To head as many bands, and storm each gate.

ETE. How then shall we proceed ? For I disdain  
To sit inactive.

CRE. On your part select  
Seven warriors who the portals may defend.

ETE. O'er squadrons to preside, or take their stand  
As single combatants ?

CRE. To lead seven squadrons,  
Choosing the bravest.

ETE. Well I understand  
Thy purpose ; to prevent the foe from scaling  
The ramparts.

CRE. Comrades of experience add ;  
For one man sees not all.

ETE. Shall I to valour  
Or wisdom give the preference

CRE. Join them both ;  
For one without the other is a thing  
Of no account.

ETE.                   It shall be done. I'll march  
Into the city, place at every gate  
A chief, as thou hast counselled, and the troops  
Distribute so that we on equal terms  
May with the foe engage. It would be tedious  
The name of every warrior to recount,  
Just at this moment, when beneath our walls  
The enemy is posted. But with speed  
I go, that I in action may not prove  
A loiterer. May it be my lot to meet  
My brother hand to hand, that with this spear  
I 'midst the lines of battle may transfix  
And kill that spoiler, who is come to lay  
My country waste. I to thy care entrust  
The nuptials of Antigone, my sister,  
And thy son Hæmon, if it be my fate  
To perish in the combat, and enforce  
Our former contract with my dying breath.  
Thou art Jocasta's brother: of what use  
Are many words? My mother in such rank  
Maintain as suits thy honour and the love  
Thou bear'st me. As for my unhappy sire,  
To his own folly are his sufferings due,  
Bereft of eyesight; him I cannot praise,  
For by his curses would he slay us both.  
One thing have we omitted—of the seer  
Tiresias to inquire if he have aught  
Of Heaven's obscure responses to disclose.  
Thy son, Menæceus from his grandsire named,  
To fetch the prophet hither will I send,  
O Creon, for he gladly will converse  
With thee: but I so scornfully have treated,  
E'en in his presence, the whole soothsayer's art,  
That he abhors me. But I, on the city  
And thee, O Creon, this injunction lay:  
If I prove stronger, suffer not the corse  
Of Polynices in this Theban realm  
To be interred: let death be the reward  
Of him who scatters dust o'er his remains,



Although he be the dearest of my friends.  
 Thus far to thee—but to my followers this  
 I add : bring forth my shield, my helm, my greaves,  
 And radiant mail, that by victorious justice  
 Accompanied, I instantly may rush  
 Amidst the fray which waits me. But to prudence,  
 Who best of all th' immortal powers protects  
 The interests of her votaries, let us pray  
 That she this city would from ruin save.

[Exit ETEOCLES.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

How long, stern Mars, shall scenes of death inspire  
 Aversion to the feasts gay Bacchus holds ?  
 Why join'st thou not the beauteous virgin choir  
 Whose heaving bosoms love's first warmth unfolds,  
 Thy hair's loose ringlets waving o'er thy face,  
 Pleased on some amorous theme the lute t' employ,  
 Dear to the Graces, dear to social joy ?  
 But thou, a foe to the devoted race  
 Of Thebé, lead'st these Argives to their fields,  
 Forming dire preludes for a tragic dance ;  
 Nor with the god whose hand the thyrsus wields,  
 In dappled skins of hinds dost thou advance ;  
 Exulting in the thong and harnessed steeds,  
 Thou driv'st thy chariot o'er Ismenos' meads,  
 And 'gainst th' invaders, in each Theban breast  
 Infusing equal rancour, prompt'st that band,  
 Seed of the dragon's teeth, to take their stand ;  
 These rush to guard the walls, and those t' invest.  
 Inhuman goddess, Discord, to the kings  
 Of Labdacus' house a train of misery brings.

II.

With sacred foliage ever clad, ye groves  
 Of famed Cithæron, whose steep cliffs abound  
 With sylvan game, thou mount where Dian loves  
 To urge through drifted snows the rapid hound,

Thou ought'st not to have nourished in thy shade  
 Jocasta's son ; then better had he died  
 When, cast forth from the palace, on thy side  
 In glittering vest the royal child was laid :  
 Nor ought the Sphynx, the curse of these domains,  
 That subtle virgin, to have winged her way  
 From thy proud heights with inauspicious strains ;  
 Armed with four talons, clenched to rend her prey,  
 These walls approaching, high into the air  
 The progeny of Cadmus did she bear,  
 By Pluto sent from hell, 'gainst Thebes she came.  
 New woes the sons of Œdipus await,  
 Again this city feels the scourge of fate,  
 For virtue springs not from the couch of shame ;  
 Fruits of th' incestuous womb, their sire's disgrace,  
 Are these devoted youths, accurst and spurious race.

## III.

Erst thy teeming soil gave birth  
 (As in barbaric accents was made known  
     To us by the loud voice of fame),  
 O Thebes, to that illustrious brood of earth,  
 Sprung from the teeth of that slain dragon sown,  
     Thy realm their prowess did adorn.  
 In honour of Harmonia's bridal morn,  
     To this favoured region came  
         All the celestial choir,  
 What time the turrets, which this grateful land  
 Impregnable by human force esteems,  
 Reared by the harp, and not the artist's hand,  
     Obedient to Amphion's lyre,  
     Arose amidst the fruitful meads  
         Where gentle Dirce leads  
 Her current, and Ismenos' waters yield  
     Abundant verdure to the field  
         Encompassed by their streams.  
 She, whom a heifer's hornéd front disguised,  
 Io, was mother to the Theban kings :  
 Successively, each bliss by mortals prized,

Hath to this city given renown,  
And hither still fair victory brings  
The noblest meed of war, the laurel's deathless crown.

TIRESIAS, MENÆCEUS, CREON, CHORUS.

TIR. [*to his daughter MANTO.*] Lead on ; for thou,  
my daughter, to the feet  
Of thy blind father, prov'st an eye as sure  
As to the mariners the polar star.  
Place me where I on level ground may tread,  
And go before, lest we both fall : thy sire  
Is feeble. In thy virgin hand preserve  
Those oracles which I in former days  
Received, when from the feathered race I drew  
My auguries, and in the sacred chair  
Of prophecy was seated. Say, thou youth  
Menæceus, son of Creon, through the city  
How far must I proceed before I reach  
Thy father, for my knees can scarce support me,  
And though full oft I raise these aching feet,  
I seem to gain no ground.

CRE. Be of good cheer,  
Tiresias, for with well-directed step  
Already have you reached your friend. My son,  
Support him : for the chariot, and the foot  
Of an infirm old man, is wont to need  
The kind assistance of some guiding hand.

TIR. No matter. I am here. Why with such haste,  
O Creon, call'st thou me ?

CRE. I have not yet  
Forgotten ; but till your exhausted strength  
Can be recovered after the fatigue  
Of your long march, take breath.

TIR. With wearied step  
I yesterday came hither from the realm  
Of Athens, for there also was a war  
Against Eumolpus, o'er whose troops I caused  
The dauntless race of Cecrops to prevail :  
Hence I possess the golden crown thou seest,



Shalt be destroyed, unless my counsels meet  
With one who will obey them. What were most  
To be desired were this : that none who spring  
From Œdipus should here reside, or hold  
The sceptre of this land, for they, impelled  
By the malignant demons, will o'erthrow  
The city. But, since evil thus prevails  
O'er good, one other method yet remains  
To save us. But unsafe were it for me  
Such truths to utter, and, on bitter terms,  
Must they whom Fate selects their country heal.  
I go : farewell ! I, as a private man,  
Shall suffer, if necessity ordain,  
With multitudes, the evils which impend :  
For how can I escape the general doom ?

CRE. Here tarry, O my venerable friend.

TIR. Detain me not.

CRE. Stay ; wherefore would you fly ?

TIR. It is thy fortune which from thee departs,  
And not Tiresias.

CRE. By what means, inform me,  
Can Thebes with its inhabitants be saved ?

TIR. Though such thy wish at present, thou ere long  
Wilt change thy purpose.

CRE. How can I be loth  
To save my country ?

TIR. Art thou anxious then  
To hear the truth ?

CRE. What ought I to pursue  
With greater zeal ?

TIR. Thou instantly shall hear  
The oracles Heaven sends me to unfold :  
But first assure me where Menæceus is,  
Who led me hither.

CRE. At your side he stands.

TIR. Far hence let him retire, while I disclose  
To thee the awful mandate of the gods.

CRE. My son with th' utmost strictness will observe  
The silence you enjoin.

TIR. Is it thy will  
That in his presence I to thee should speak?

CRE. Of aught that could preserve his native land  
He with delight would hear.

TIR. Then, to the means  
Which through my oracles are pointed out,  
Yield due attention; for by acting thus  
Ye shall preserve this city, where the race  
Of Cadmus dwell; thou, in thy country's cause,  
Thy son Menæceus art ordained to slay:  
Since thou on me importunately call'st  
The dread behest of fortune to unfold.

CRE. What say you? How unwelcome are these words,  
O aged man!

TIR. I only speak of things  
Just as they are; and add, thou must perform  
Th' injunction.

CRE. How much evil have you uttered  
In one short moment!

TIR. Though to thee unwelcome,  
Yet to thy country fame and health.

CRE. Your words  
I hear not, nor your purpose comprehend:  
The city I abandon to its fate.

TIR. His purpose he retracts, and is no longer  
The man he was.

CRE. Depart in peace; I need not  
Your oracles.

TIR. Hath truth then lost its merit,  
Because thou art unhappy?

CRE. By those knees,  
You I implore, and by those hoary locks.

TIR. Why sue to me? The ills 'gainst which thou pray'st  
Are not to be avoided.

CRE. Peace! Divulge not  
In Thebes these tidings.

TIR. Dost thou bid me act  
Unjustly? Them I never will suppress.

CRE. What is your purpose, to destroy my son?

TIR. Let others see to that : I only speak  
As Heaven ordains.

CRE. But whence was such a curse  
On me and on my progeny derived?

TIR. Well hast thou asked this question, and a field  
For our debate laid open. In yon den,  
Where erst the guard of Dirce's fountain lay,  
That earth-born dragon, must the youth pour forth  
His blood for a libation to the ground,  
And expiate by his death the ancient hate  
To Cadmus borne by Mars, who thus avenges  
The progeny of earth, the dragon, slain :  
This done, the god of battles will become  
Your champion ; and when earth shall, in the stead  
Of her lost fruit the dragon, have received  
The fruit of that heroic race who sprung  
From its own teeth, and human blood for blood.  
Propitious shall ye find the teeming soil,  
Which erst, instead of wheat, produced a crop  
Of radiant helms. Die then some victim must  
Who from the jaws of that slain dragon sprung :  
But thou alone in Thebes remain'st who thence  
Deriv'st thy birth unmixed, both by thy sire  
And by the female line ; thence, too, descend  
Thy generous sons : but Haemon must not bleed,  
Because he is espoused, nor in a state  
Of pure celibacy doth still remain,  
For he possesses an affianced bride,  
Although he be a stranger to her bed.  
But, for the city, if this tender youth  
Shall as a chosen victim be devoted,  
He by his death will save his native land,  
Will cause Adrastus and his Argive host  
With anguish to return, before their eyes  
Placing grim death, and add renown to Thebes.  
From these two fortunes make thy choice of one,  
Whether thy son or city thou wilt save.  
Thou hast heard all I had to say in answer  
To thy inquiries. Daughter, lead me home.

Unwise is he who practises the art  
 Of divination ; for if he announce  
 Evils to come, he is abhorred by those  
 Who hear him ; but, through pity, if he utter  
 Untruths that please, he sins against the gods.  
 Phœbus alone, who cannot fear the hate  
 Of man, his own responses should pronounce.

[*Exit* TIRESIAS.]

CHOR. What means this silence ? Wherefore hast thou  
 closed

Thy mouth, O Creon ? But I too am smitten  
 With equal terror.

CRE. How can a reply  
 Be made to such proposal ? What I mean  
 To say is evident. To such a pitch  
 Of woe may I ne'er come as to resign  
 My son to bleed for Thebes ! In all mankind  
 The love they bear their children is as strong  
 As that of life ; nor is there any father  
 Who for a victim will yield up his son.  
 May no man praise me on such terms as slaying  
 Those I begot ! I stand prepared to die,  
 For I am ripe in years, and would for Thebes  
 Make due atonement with my streaming gore.  
 But, O my son, ere the whole city know,  
 Regardless of that frantic prophet's voice,  
 Fly from this land, fly with your utmost speed ;  
 He will proclaim the oracle to those  
 Who wield the sceptre, or lead forth our troops  
 To battle, visiting each chieftain stationed  
 At the seven gates : if haply we with him  
 Can be beforehand, you may yet be saved ;  
 But if you loiter, we are both undone.  
 And you must die.

MEN. But whither, to what city,  
 What hospitable stranger speed my flight ?

CRE. As far as possible from these domains.

MEN. You ought to name a place for my retreat,  
 And I must execute what you command.



CRE. Passing through Delphi—

MEN.

Whither, O my sire,

Must I proceed?

CRE. To the Ætolian land.

MEN. But whither thence shall I direct my course?

CRE. Next to Thesprotia.

MEN.

Where Dodona rears

Her hallowed grove.

CRE.

Full well you comprehend

My meaning.

MEN. There what safeguard shall I find?

CRE. Its tutelary god your steps will guide.

MEN. But how shall I with treasures be supplied?

CRE. To you will I convey abundant gold.

MEN. Discreetly have you spoken, O my sire.

CRE. Now leave me.

MEN.

To your sister I would go—

I mean Jocasta, who first nurtured me

In infancy, when of my mother reft

An orphan I became; one fond adieu

To her I fain would bid, and of my life

Then take due care.

CRE.

But go, or you will frustrate

All I can do to save you.

[*Exit CREON.*]

MEN.

With what art,

O virgins, have I soothed my father's fears,

By specious words (my promise to accomplish)

Deceiving him who sends me hence, to rob

The city of those fortunes which await her,

And brand me with a coward's hateful name.

In an old man such weakness claims excuse;

But I should sin beyond all hopes of pardon

If I betrayed the land which gave me birth.

I go, to save this city; be assured,

Such are the terms on which I yield up life,

Content to perish in my country's cause.

If they whom Heaven's oracular response

Leaves at full liberty, by no decrees

Of the resistless destinies impelled,  
 Maintain their ground in battle, nothing loth  
 To bleed, the champions of their native land,  
 Before yon turrents, base were it in me,  
 If proving faithless to my sire, my brother,  
 And country, like a dastard, I should speed  
 My flight from these domains; where'er I live,  
 Shame would o'ertake me. From the starry pole  
 May Jove forefend, and Mars, in human gore  
 Exulting, who the sceptre of this realm  
 Erst gave to kings, earth's progeny, the seed  
 Of that slain dragon's teeth. But I will go,  
 Ascend the topmost pinnacles, and piercing  
 My breast, where they o'erhang the dragon's cave,  
 The very spot the seer described, redeem  
 My country from its foes. I have pronounced  
 Th' irrevocable word. But, by my death,  
 On Thebes no sordid present to bestow,  
 I haste, and from these mischiefs will set free  
 The groaning land. Would every man exert  
 To their full stretch his talents to promote  
 The public interest, every state, exposed  
 To fewer ills, hereafter might be blest.

[Exit MENÆCEUS.]

CHORUS

ODE.

I.

O winged fiend, who from the earth  
 And an infernal viper drew'st thy birth,  
 Thou cam'st, thou cam'st, to bear away,  
 Amidst incessant groans, thy prey,  
 And harass Cadmus' race,  
 Thy frantic pinions did resound,  
 Thy fangs impressed the ghastly wound,  
 Thou ruthless monster with a virgin's face:  
 What youths from Dirce's fount were borne aloof,  
 While thou didst utter thy discordant song,  
 The furies haunted every roof,

And o'er these walls sat slaughter brooding long.  
 Sure from some god whose breast no mercy knew  
 Their source impure these horrors drew.  
 From house to house the cries  
 Of matrons did resound,  
 And wailing maidens rent the skies  
 With frequent shrieks loud as the thunder's burst,  
 Oft as the Sphinx accurst,  
 Some youth, whom in the Theban streets she found,  
 Bore high in air ; all gazed in wild affright,  
 Till she vanished from their sight.

## II.

At length the Pythian god's command  
 Brought Œdipus to this ill-fated land ;  
 Each heart did then with transport glow,  
 Though now his name renew their woe :  
 By angry Heaven beguiled,  
 When he th' enigma had explained,  
 His mother for a bride he gained ;  
 With incest hence the city was defiled.  
 Fresh murders soon his curses will inspire,  
 Urging his sons to an unnatural strife.  
 We that heroic youth admire  
 Who in his country's cause resigns his life,  
 He, though his father Creon wail his fate,  
 With triumph in the fell debate,  
 Will crown these sevenfold towers.  
 Of Heaven I ask no more  
 Than that such children may be ours :  
 Thy aid, O Pallas, in th' adventurous deed  
 Caused Cadmus to succeed,  
 And slay the dragon, whose envenomed gore  
 Was sprinkled on these rocks ; by Heaven's command  
 Hence some pest still haunts the land.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MES. Who at the portals of the regal dome  
 Is stationed ? Open, bring Jocasta forth

From her apartment. Ho ! advance at length,  
And listen to my voice, illustrious wife  
Of Œdipus. No longer grieve, nor shed  
The piteous tear.

JOCASTA, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

JOC. Come you, my friend, to bring  
Sad tidings of Eteocles the slain,  
Beside whose shield you ever stood to guard  
The warrior from the javelins of the foe ?  
With what important message are you charged ?  
Is my son dead, or lives he ? Tell me all.

MES. He lives, that fear be banished.

JOC. Are our walls  
By their seven towers secured ?

MES. They still remain  
Unshaken, and the city is not sacked.

JOC. Have they withstood the perilous assault  
From th' Argive combatants ?

MES. The fate of battle  
Is just decided : the intrepid race  
Of Cadmus o'er Mycene's host prevailed.

JOC. Yet one thing more ; I by th' immortal powers  
Conjure you, tell me whether you know aught  
Of Polynices, for I wish to learn  
If he yet live.

MES. At present both thy sons  
Are living.

JOC. Bliss attend you : but inform me  
How ye the troops of Argos from the gates,  
Beleaguered in the turrets, could repel ?  
That to my home with speed I may return,  
The blind and aged Œdipus to soothe  
With the glad tidings that this city's saved.

MES. Since Creon's son, who for his country died,  
Mounting the topmost pinnacles, transpierced  
His bosom with the falchion, and became  
The generous saviour of his native land  
Eteocles distributed seven cohorts

At the seven gates, and to each band assigned  
Its leader, by their vigilance to check  
The furious onset of the Argive host :  
He stationed a reserve of horse to succour  
The horse, and infantry with bucklers armed  
Behind the infantry, that where the walls  
Were with the greatest violence assailed  
Fresh strength might be at hand. As on our turrets  
We stood exalted, and o'erlooked the plain,  
The Argive host we saw, with silver shields  
Conspicuous, from Teumessus' mount descend :  
Over their trenches in their rapid march  
Soon vaulting, to the city they drew near,  
While pæans, mingled with the trumpet's sound,  
At the same instant through their ranks were heard.  
And on the Theban walls. His squadron, first,  
By their raised targets screened, which cast around  
A horrid shade, to the Nēitian gate  
Parthenopæus led, the daring son  
Of Atalanta ; on his central shield,  
His mother's trophy, the Ætolian boar,  
Pierced by that huntress with unerring shaft.  
The chief displayed. Amphiareus the seer  
Marched to the gates of Prætus, on his car  
Conveying victims : no unseemly pride  
In his armorial bearings was expressed,  
But on his modest buckler there appeared  
A vacant field. At the Ogygian portals  
The fierce Hippomedon maintained his stand.  
By this achievement was his orbéd targe  
Distinguished : Argus, with unnumbered eyes,  
A part of which, awakening fresh from sleep,  
Oped with the rising stars, meantime the rest  
He with the setting constellations closed ;  
As more distinctly, when the chief was slain,  
Might be discerned. But Tydeus next his post  
Before the Homolean gate maintained :  
With a huge lion's bristly hide his shield  
Was covered, in his better hand a torch

He, like Prometheus of the Titans' race,  
Brandished to fire the city. To the gate  
From Dirce's fountain named his marshalled troops  
Thy son the furious Polynices led ;  
The rapid mares of Potnia (the device  
Portrayed upon his target) seemed to leap  
With panic terrors smitten, and, grown frantic,  
All crowded in a circle to the rim.  
Equal in courage to the God of War,  
Next with his cohort to Electra's gate  
Rushed Capaneus : the ensign wrought in steel  
Upon his buckler was an earth-born giant,  
Whose shoulders carried a whole city torn  
With levers from its basis, to denote  
The menaced fate of Thebes. Adrastus' self  
At the seventh gate appeared ; on his left arm  
The Hydra with a hundred snakes begirt,  
Which filled the convex surface of his shield,  
That badge of Argive pride, the warrior bore.  
From Thebes, surrounded by its lofty walls,  
The serpents opening their voracious jaws  
Conveyed the sons of Cadmus. Each device  
I could observe securely, as I passed  
Betwixt the leaders of the adverse hosts,  
Distinguished by the pledge of truce. At first  
We at a distance fought with bows and shafts,  
And slings and stones ; but when our troops obtained  
An easy conquest in this missile war,  
Tydeus, and Polynices, thy brave son,  
Both cried at the same instant, " O ye race  
Of Danaus, ere our squadrons are dispersed  
By weapons from yon lofty turrets hurled,  
Why on the portals scruple ye to make  
One resolute assault with all our strength,  
The light-armed troops, our horse, and brazen cars ?"  
Soon as they heard their leader's cheering voice,  
None loitered, but full many a valiant Argive  
Was through the brain transpierced, while from the walls,  
Like skilful divers, our expiring friends

Oft threw themselves ; the thirsty ground with streams  
Of gore they drenched. Fierce Atalanta's son,  
Not Argos, but Arcadia gave him birth,  
Rushed like a whirlwind to the gates, and called  
For flaming brands and axes to destroy ;  
But Periclimenus, who from the god  
Of ocean sprung, soon quelled his frantic rage :  
Torn from the battlement, a stone, whose mass  
Had filled a chariot, on his head he threw,  
The stripling's auburn hair and crashing skull  
It severed, and those rosy cheeks defiled  
With gushing blood ; to the maternal arms  
Of her who twangs the unerring bow, the nymph  
Of Mænalon, he never shall return.  
But when thy son Eteocles surveyed  
Our triumphs at this gate, the rest with speed  
He visited ; I followed, and beheld  
Tydeus attended by a phalanx armed  
With bucklers hurling their Ætolian spears  
Into the loftiest towers, with such success  
That they constrained our fugitives to quit  
Their station on the ramparts ; but thy son  
Rallied them like a hunter, and collected  
Each warrior to resume his post ; their fears  
Dispelled, we hasted to another gate.  
But in what terms shall I describe the madness  
Of Capaneus ? He with a ladder came,  
And boasted that not e'en the lightning launched  
By Jove's own hand should hinder him from scaling  
The towers to sack the city. Thus he spoke ;  
And 'midst a storm of stones, from step to step  
Ascending, still sufficient shelter found  
Beneath the huge circumference of his shield ;  
But as he reached the summit of the wall  
Jove smote him with a thunderbolt, earth gave  
A sound so loud that all were seized with terror ;  
As from a sling his scattered limbs were thrown,  
His blasted tresses mounted to the skies,  
On earth his blood was sprinkled, but his hands

And feet were, like Ixion on the wheel,  
 Whirled with incessant motion, till at length  
 Down to the ground he fell a smouldering corse.  
 Soon as Adrastus saw Jove warred against him,  
 He with his Argive host in swift retreat  
 Again the trenches crossed : but when our troops  
 Marked the auspicious sign vouchsafed by Jove,  
 They from the gates rushed forth with brazen cars,  
 With cavalry in ponderous arms arrayed,  
 And 'midst the Argive squadrons hurled their spears :  
 Each ill concurred to overwhelm the foe,  
 Death raged amongst them, from their chariots thrown  
 They perished, wheels flew off, 'gainst axle crashed  
 Axle, and corses were on corses heaped.  
 The Theban turrets we this day have saved  
 From ruin, but to the immortal powers,  
 And them alone, belongs it to decide  
 Whether auspicious fortune on this land  
 Shall smile hereafter.

CHOR. In th' embattled field  
 'Tis glorious to prevail : but were the gods  
 More favourably disposed, I should enjoy  
 A greater share of bliss.

JOC. The gods and fortune  
 Have amply done their part : for both my sons  
 Are living, and the city hath escaped :  
 Unhappy Creon only seems to reap  
 The bitter fruits of my accursed nuptials  
 With Œdipus, for he hath lost his son,  
 And such event, though fortunate for Thebes,  
 To him is grievous. In your tale proceed.  
 Say on ; what farther have my sons resolved ?

MES. The sequel wave ; for all with thee thus far  
 Goes prosperously.

JOC. These words but serve to raise  
 Suspicion : nothing must be left untold.

MES. What wouldst thou more than that thy sons are safe ?

JOC. But whether my good fortune will prove lasting  
 I wish to know.



MES.                   Release me : for thy son  
Is left without his shield-bearer.

JOC.                                   Some ill  
In mystic darkness wrapt you strive to hide.

MES. I to these welcome tidings cannot add  
Such as would make thee wretched.

JOC.                                   No way left,  
Unless you through the air could wing your flight,  
Have you to 'scape me.

MES.                                   After this glad message  
Why wilt thou not allow me to depart,  
Rather than speak of grievous ills? Thy sons  
Are both resolved on a most impious deed :  
Apart from either army to engage  
In single combat, to the Argive troops  
And the assembled citizens of Thebes  
Have they addressed such language as ne'er ought  
To reach their ears. Eteocles began :  
Above the field high on a tower he stood,  
Commanding silence first to be proclaimed  
Through all the host, and cried : "O peerless chiefs  
Of the Achaian land, who, to invade  
This city, from the realms of Danaus come,  
And ye who spring from Cadmus, in the cause  
Of Polynices barter not your lives,  
Nor yet on my behalf ; I, from such dangers  
To save you, with my brother will engage  
In single combat, and if him I slay  
Here in this palace shall I reign alone,  
But I to him the city will yield up  
If I am vanquished : from the bloody strife  
Desisting, ye to Argos shall return,  
Nor perish in a foreign land : enough  
Of Thebans too on this ensanguined plain  
Lie breathless corses." With these words his speech  
The dauntless chief concluded. From the ranks,  
Thy offspring, Polynices, then advanced  
And the proposal praised, while, with a shout,  
The Argive and the Theban hosts, who deemed



## ANTIGONE, JOCASTA, CHORUS.

ANT. Before these gates, my mother, with what sounds  
Of recent horror com'st thou to alarm  
Thy friends.

JOC. Ere now, my daughter, both thy brothers  
Have lost their lives.

ANT. What sayst thou ?

JOC. They went forth  
Resolved on single combat.

ANT. Wretched me !  
What more hast thou, O mother, to relate ?

JOC. Nought that can give thee joy, but follow me.

ANT. Say whither must I go, and leave behind  
My virgin comrades ?

JOC. To the host.

ANT. I blush  
To mingle with the crowd.

JOC. These bashful fears  
Are such as in thy present situation  
Become thee not.

ANT. How can my help avail ?

JOC. Thou haply mayst appease this impious strife  
Betwixt thy brothers.

ANT. Mother, by what means ?

JOC. By falling prostrate at their knees with me.

ANT. Lead on betwixt the van of either host,  
This crisis will admit of no delay.

JOC. Haste, O my daughter, haste, for if my sons  
I haply can prevent ere they begin  
Th' accurst encounter, I shall yet behold  
The blessed sun ; but if I find them slain  
With them will I partake one common grave.

[*Exeunt* JOCASTA and ANTIGONE.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Ah, what boding horror throws  
 Chilling damps into my breast,  
 How is this whole frame opprest  
 By sympathetic pity for the woes  
 Of her who to those valiant youths gave birth :  
 But which of her loved children twain  
 His sword with kindred gore shall stain  
 (Avert it, righteous Jove, and thou, O genial earth !)  
 And in the strife a brother slay,  
 The stroke descending through his cloven shield ?  
 To whom the sad last tribute shall I pay,  
 A breathless corse stretcht weltering on the field ?

II.

Woe to thee, thou Theban ground !  
 Those twin lions fired with rage  
 Couch their lances to engage,  
 And stand prepared to aim the deadly wound.  
 In evil hour the thought of single fight  
 Entered their souls. While many a tear,  
 Shuddering with excess of fear,  
 For them I vainly shed, their dirge will I recite,  
 Though in a harsh barbaric strain ;  
 Their destined portion slaughter is at hand,  
 Ere Phœbus sinks into the western main  
 Their forfeit lives the furies shall demand.  
 But I my warbled lamentations cease,  
 For, with a brow by clouds of grief o'ercast,  
 Creon, approaching these abodes, I view.

CREON, CHORUS.

CRE. Ah me ! shall I bewail my private woes  
 Or those of Thebes surrounded by such clouds  
 As Acheron exhales ! My valiant son  
 Died for his country, an illustrious name

Obtaining, but to me a source of grief.  
 That self-devoted victim's mangled corse  
 I, from yon rock, the dragon's curst abode,  
 Wretch that I am, have in these hands just borne :  
 With lamentations my whole house resounds.  
 I, a forlorn old man, my aged sister  
 Jocasta come to fetch, that she may lave  
 And on the decent bier stretch forth the corse  
 Of my departed son. For it behoves  
 The living, by bestowing on the dead  
 Funereal honours, to adore the god  
 Who rules in hell beneath.

CHOR. From these abodes,  
 O Creon, is your sister just gone forth,  
 And on her mother's footsteps did attend  
 The nymph Antigone.

CRE. Inform me, whither,  
 And to what scene of recent woe ?

CHOR. She heard  
 Her sons by single combat were resolved  
 Their contest for this palace to decide.

CRE. What sayst thou ? I came hither but to grace  
 With due sepulchral rites my breathless son,  
 Nor of these fresh disasters thought to hear.

CHOR. 'Tis a long time, O Creon, since your sister  
 Went hence ; ere now I deem the fatal strife  
 Betwixt the sons of Œdipus is ended.

CRE. Ah me ! an evil omen I behold  
 In that deep gloom which overcasts the eyes  
 And visage of yon messenger ; he comes,  
 No doubt, the whole transaction to relate.

MESSENGER, CREON, CHORUS.

MES. Wretch that I am ! What language can I find ?

CRE. We are undone ; for with a luckless prelude  
 Thy speech begins.

MES. I yet again exclaim,  
 Ah, wretched me ! Most grievous are the tidings  
 I bring.

CRE. Of any farther ills than those  
Which have already happened, wouldst thou speak

MES. Your sister's sons, O Creon, are no more.

CRE. Great are the woes, alas ! which thou relat'st,  
To me and to this city.

MES. Hast thou heard,  
O house of Ædipus, how both his sons  
Partook one common fate ?

CHOR. These very walls,  
Were they endued with sense, would shed a tear.

CRE. Oh, what a load of misery ! wretched me !

MES. Did you but know of your fresh ills—

CRE. Could fate  
Have any ills more grievous in reserve ?

MES. With her two sons your wretched sister's dead.

CHOR. In concert wake, my friends, the plaintive strain,  
And smite your heads with those uplifted hands.

CRE. Hapless Jocasta, what a close of life  
And wedlock, through th' enigma of the Sphinx,  
Hast thou experienced ! But how both her sons  
Were slain in that dire contest, through the curses  
Pronounced by Ædipus their injured sire,  
Inform me.

MES. How Thebes triumphed o'er th' assailants,  
And her beleaguered turrets saved, you know ;  
Nor are the walls so distant, but from thence  
Ere now those great events you must have heard.  
Soon as in brazen panoply the sons  
Of aged Ædipus were clad, they stood  
In the midway 'twixt either host, kings both,  
Of mighty hosts both chieftains, to decide  
This strife in single combat. Then his eyes  
Towards Argos turning, Polynices prayed :  
" O Juno, awful queen, for I became  
Thy votary since the daughter of Adrastus  
I wedded, and in his dominions found  
A habitation, grant that I may slay  
My brother, and with kindred gore distain  
In the dire conflict this victorious arm ;

For an unseemly wreath, nor to be gained  
Unless I take away the life of him  
Who springs from the same parents, I to thee  
My vows address." Tears burst forth, in a stream  
Equal to the calamity they wailed,  
From multitudes, who on each other gazed.  
Eteocles, then turning to the fane  
Of Pallas, goddess of the golden shield,  
Exclaimed : " O daughter of imperial Jove,  
Grant me with vigorous arm a conquering spear  
To hurl against my brother's breast, and smite  
The man who comes to lay my country waste."  
But when Etruria's trumpet with shrill voice  
Had, like the kindled torch, a signal given  
The combat to begin, with dreadful rage  
Against each other rushing, like two boars  
Whetting their ruthless tusks, they fought till foam  
O'erspread their cheeks ; with pointed spears they made  
A furious onset ; but each warrior stooped  
Behind his brazen target, and the weapon  
Was aimed in vain ; whene'er above the rim  
Of his huge buckler either chief beheld  
The face of his antagonist, he strove  
To pierce it with his spear ; but through the holes  
Bored in the centre of their shields they both  
With caution looked, nor could inflict a wound  
By the protended javelin. A cold sweat,  
Through terror for the safety of their friends,  
From every pore of those who viewed the fight,  
Far more than from the combatants, arose.  
But, stumbling on a stone beneath his feet,  
Eteocles had chanced to leave one leg  
Unguarded by his shield ; then onward rushed  
Fierce Polynices with his lifted spear,  
And marking where he at the part exposed  
Most surely might direct the stroke, his ankle  
Pierced with an Argive weapon, while the race  
Of Danaus gave a universal shout.  
But in this struggle, when the chief who first

Was wounded saw the shoulder of his foe  
 Laid bare, he into Polynices' breast,  
 His utmost force exerting, thrust his spear.  
 Again the citizens of Thebes rejoiced ;  
 But at the point his weapon broke : disarmed  
 Backwards he sunk, and on one knee sustained  
 The weight of his whole body ; from the ground  
 Meantime the fragment of a massive rock  
 Uprearing, he at Polynices threw,  
 And smote his shivered javelin. Of their spears  
 Now both deprived on equal terms they fought  
 With their drawn falchions hand to hand, the din  
 Of war resounded from their crashing shields.  
 Then haply to Eteocles occurred  
 A stratagem in Thessaly devised,  
 Which through his frequent commerce with that land  
 He had adopted ; from the stubborn fight,  
 As if disabled, seeming to retire,  
 His left leg he drew back, but with his shield  
 Guarded his flank, on his right foot sprung forward,  
 Plunged in the navel of the foe his sword,  
 And pierced the spinal joint ; his sides through pain  
 Now writhing, Polynices fell, with drops  
 Of gore the earth distaining. But his brother,  
 As if he in the combat had obtained  
 Decisive victory, casting on the ground  
 His falchion, tore the glittering spoils away,  
 Fixing his thoughts on those alone and blind  
 To his own safety ; hence was he deceived :  
 For, still with a small portion of the breath  
 Of life endued, fallen Polynices, grasping  
 His sword e'en in the agonies of death,  
 The liver of Eteocles transpierced.  
 With furious teeth they rend the crimson soil,  
 And prostrate by each other's side have left  
 The conquest dubious.

CRE.                      Much, alas ! thy woes  
 Do I bewail, for by the strictest ties  
 With thee, O Œdipus, am I connected ;



An angry god, too plainly it appears,  
Thy imprecations hath fulfilled.

MES.                      What woes  
Succeeded these, now hear. As both her sons  
Expiring lay, with an impetuous step,  
Attended by Antigone, rushed forth  
The wretched mother : pierced with deadly wounds  
Beholding them, " My children," she exclaimed,  
" Too late to your assistance am I come."  
Embracing each by turns, she then bewailed  
The toil with which she at her breast in vain  
Had nurtured them. She ended with a groan,  
In which their sister joined : " O ye who cherished  
A drooping mother's age, my nuptial rites,  
Dear brothers, ere the hymeneal morn  
Have ye deserted." From his inmost breast  
Eteocles with difficulty breathed ;  
His mother's voice, however, reached his ear.  
And stretching forth his clammy hand, no words  
Had he to utter, but his swimming eyes  
Shed tears expressive of his filial love.  
But Polynices, whose lungs still performed  
Their functions, gazing on his aged mother  
And sister, cried, " O mother, we are lost ;  
I pity thee—my sister too I pity—  
And my slain brother, for although that friend  
Became a foe, this heart still holds him dear.  
But bury me, O thou who gav'st me birth,  
And my loved sister, in my native land  
Your mediation to appease the city  
Uniting, that of my paternal soil  
Enough for a poor grave I may obtain,  
Though I have lost the empire. Close these eyes  
With thy maternal hand " Her hand he placed  
Over his eyelids, " and farewell : the shades  
Of night already compass me around."  
Their miserable souls they both breathed forth  
At the same instant. When their mother saw  
This fresh calamity, no longer able

The weight of her afflictions to sustain,  
 She from the corpses of her sons snatched up  
 A sword, and an atrocious deed performed ;  
 For through her neck the pointed steel she drove,  
 And lies in death 'twixt those she held most dear,  
 E'en now embracing both. A strife of words  
 Broke forth in the two armies : we maintained  
 The triumph to our king belonged, but they  
 To his antagonist. Amid the chiefs  
 A vehement contention rose ; some urged  
 That Polynices' spear first gave the wound ;  
 Others, that since both combatants were slain  
 The victory still was dubious. From the lines  
 Of battle now Antigone retired ;  
 They rushed to arms ; but with auspicious forethought  
 The progeny of Cadmus had not thrown  
 Their shields aside : we in an instant made  
 A fierce assault, invading by surprise  
 The host of Argos yet unsheathed in mail ;  
 Not one withstood the shock, they o'er the field  
 In a tumultuous flight were scattered wide :  
 Gore streamed from many a corse of those who fell  
 Beneath our spears. No sooner had we gained  
 A victory in the combat, than some reared  
 The statue of imperial Jove, adorned  
 With trophies : others, stripping off the shields  
 Of the slain Argives, lodged within the walls  
 Our plunder : with Antigone, the rest  
 Bring hither the remains of the deceased,  
 That o'er them every friend may shed a tear,  
 For to the city hath this conflict proved  
 In part the most auspicious, but in part  
 The source of grievous ills.

CHOR.

By fame alone

No longer are the miseries which this house  
 Have visited made public ; at the gates  
 Are the three corpses to be seen of those  
 Who, by one common death, have in the shades  
 Of everlasting night their portion found.

## ANTIGONE, CREON, CHORUS.

ANT. The wavy ringlets o'er my tender cheeks  
 I cease to spread, regardless of the blush  
 Which tinges with a crimson hue the face  
 Of virgins. Onward am I borne with speed  
 Like the distracted Mænades, not busied  
 In Bacchus' rites, but Pluto's, from my hair  
 Rending the golden caul, and casting off  
 The saffron robe ; o'er the funereal pomp  
 Ah me ! presiding. Well hast thou deserved  
 Thy name, O Polynices (wretched Thebes !),  
 For thine was not a vulgar strife, but murder  
 Retaliated by murder hath destroyed  
 The house of Œdipus ; the source whence streamed  
 Fraternal gore was parricide. But whom  
 Shall I invoke to lead the tuneful dirge,  
 Or in what plaints, taught by the tragic Muse,  
 Solicit yonder vaulted roofs to join  
 With me in tears, while hither I conduct  
 Three kindred corpses smeared with gore, to add  
 Fresh triumphs to that fury who marked out  
 For total ruin the devoted house  
 Of thee, O Œdipus, whose luckless skill  
 That intricate enigma did unfold,  
 And slay the Sphinx who chanted it ? My sire,  
 What Grecian, what Barbarian, or what chief  
 In ancient days illustrious, who that sprung  
 From human race, hath e'er endured such ills  
 As thou hast done, such public griefs endured ?  
 Seated upon the topmost spray of oak,  
 Of branching pine, the bird, who just lost  
 Its mother, wakes a sympathetic song  
 Of plaints and anguish : thus o'er the deceased  
 Lamenting, I in solitude shall waste  
 The remnant of my life midst gushing tears.  
 O'er whom shall I first cast the tresses rent  
 From these disfigured brows, upon the breasts  
 Of her who with maternal love sustained

My childhood, or my brothers' ghastly wounds?  
 Ho ! Œdipus, come forth from thy abode—  
 Blind as thou art, my aged sire, display  
 Thy wretchedness. O thou who, having veiled  
 With thickest darkness those extinguished eyes,  
 Beneath yon roof a tedious life prolong'st :  
 Hear'st thou my voice, O thou, who through the hall  
 Oft mov'st at random, and as oft reliev'st  
 Thy wearied feet on the unwelcome couch ?

ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE, CREON, CHORUS.

(ED. Why, O my daughter, hast thou called me forth,  
 A wretch, who by this faithful staff supply  
 The want of sight, to the loathed glare of day,  
 From a dark chamber, where I to my bed  
 Have been confined, through those incessant tears  
 My woes extort, grown grey before my time,  
 And wasted by affliction, till I seem  
 As unsubstantial as the ambient air,  
 A spectre rising from the realms beneath,  
 Or wingéd dream ?

ANT. Prepare thyself to hear  
 The inauspicious tidings I relate :  
 Thy sons, thy consort too, the faithful staff  
 Of thy blind footsteps and their constant guide,  
 No longer view the sun. Alas, my sire !

(ED. Ah me ! The woes I suffer call forth groans  
 And shrieks abundant : but inform me how  
 These three, O daughter, left the realms of light.

ANT. Not to reproach thee, or insult thy woes,  
 My father, but in sadness do I speak ;  
 Thy evil genius, laden with the sword,  
 With blazing torches and with impious war,  
 Rushed on thy sons.

(ED. Ah me !

ANT. Why groan'st thou thus ?

(ED. For my dear sons.

ANT. 'Twould aggravate thy griefs,  
 If thou with eyesight wert again endued,

The chariot of the sun, and these remains  
Of the deceased, to view.

ED How both my sons  
Have lost their lives is evident: but say,  
To what my consort owes her piteous fate?

ANT. Her tears were seen by all; her breasts she bared

A suppliant to her sons, whom, near the gate  
Electra, in the mead she found where springs  
The lotus ; like two lions for a den  
Wah spears had they been fighting : from their wounds,  
Now stiff and cold, scarce oozed the clotted gore,  
Which Mars for a libation had bestowed  
On ruthless Pluto : snatching from the dead  
A brazen sword, she plunged it in her breast :  
Slain by the luckless weapon of her sons,  
Close to her sons thus fell she. On this day  
The god who wrought such horrors, O my sire,  
Hath poured forth his collected stores of wrath  
On this devoted house.

CHOR.                      This day hath proved  
A source of many evils to the house  
Of Œdipus ; may more auspicious fates  
On the remainder of his life attend !

CRE. Your lamentations cease, for it is time  
To mention the interment of the dead.  
But to my words, O Œdipus, attend :  
Eteocles thy son hath to these hands  
Consigned the sceptre of the Theban realm,  
On Hæmon, at his nuptials with thy daughter  
Antigone, to be bestowed in dower :  
I for this cause no longer can allow thee  
Here to reside : for in the clearest terms  
Tiresias has pronounced that, while thou dwell'st  
In these domains, Thebes never can be blest.  
Therefore depart. Nor through a wanton pride,  
Nor any hate I bear thee, do I hold  
Such language, but because I justly dread  
Thy evil genius will destroy this land.

ÆD. How wretched from the moment of my birth  
Me hast thou made, O fate, if ever man  
Knew misery : ere I from my mother's womb  
Was to the light brought forth, Apollo warned  
The royal Laius with prophetic voice,  
'That I, his future child, who 'gainst the will  
Of Heaven had been begotten, should become  
The murderer of my father. Wretched me !  
But soon as I was born he who begot  
Sought to destroy me, for in me a foe  
He deemed would view the sun : but 'twas ordained  
That I should slay him. While I yet was loth  
To quit the breast, he sent me for a prey  
To savage beasts ; I 'scaped : but would to Heaven  
Cithæron had, for saving me, been plunged  
Into the fathomless and yawning gulf  
Of Tartarus ! Fortune gave me for a servant  
To Polybus. But having slain my sire,  
Wretch that I am, my hapless mother's bed  
Ascending, thence did I at once beget  
Both sons and brothers : them have I destroyed  
By showering down on my devoted race  
The curses I inherited from Laius.  
Yet was not I by nature made so void  
Of understanding as to form a plot  
'Gainst my own eyesight or my children's lives,  
Unless some god had interfered. No more.  
What shall I do ? Ah me ! what faithful guide  
My feet, through blindness tottering, will attend ?  
Jocasta the deceased ? While yet she lived,  
I know she would. Or my two noble sons ?  
They are no more. Have not I youth still left  
Sufficient to find means to gain me food ?  
But where shall I procure it ? Or why thus,  
O Creon, do you utterly destroy me ?  
For you will take away my poor remains  
Of life, if you expel me from this land.  
Yet will not I, by twining round your knees  
These arms, put on the semblance of a dastard :

For the renown I gained in days of yore,  
Though miserable, I never will belie.

CRE. Thou with a manly spirit hast refused  
To clasp my knees ; but in the Theban realm  
No longer can I suffer thee to dwell.  
Of the deceased, the one into the palace  
Must be conveyed ; but as for him who came  
With foreign troops to lay his country waste,  
The corse of Polynices, cast it forth  
Unburied from the confines of this land.  
This edict, by a herald, to all Thebes  
Will I announce ; whoe'er shall be detected  
Adorning with a garland his remains,  
Or o'er them scattering earth, shall be with death  
Requited : for, unwept and uninterred,  
He for a prey to vultures must be left.  
No longer, O Antigone, lament  
O'er these three breathless corses, but with speed  
To your apartment go, and there remain  
Amidst your virgin comrades till to-morrow,  
When Hæmon's bed awaits you.

ANT. O my sire,  
Into what hopeless misery art thou plunged !  
For thee far more than for the dead I moan ;  
Thou hast not aught to make thy weight of woe  
Less grievous : the afflictions thou endur'st  
Are universal. But, O thou new king,  
Of thee I ask, why dost thou treat my father  
With scorn, why banish him from Thebes, why frame  
Harsh laws against a wretched corse ?

CRE. Such counsels  
Were by Eteocles, not me, devised.

ANT. Devoid of sense are they ; thou, too, art frantic,  
Who these decrees obey'st.

CRE. Is it not just  
To execute th' injunctions we receive ?

ANT. No, not if they are base and ill-advised.

CRE. What mean you ? Can it be unjust to cast  
His body to the dogs ?

ANT. A lawless vengeance  
Is this which ye exact.

CRE. Because he waged  
An impious war against his native city.

ANT. Hath not he yielded up his life to fate?

CRE. He shall be punished also in the loss  
Of sepulture.

ANT. Wherein, if he required  
His portion of the realm, did he transgress?

CRE. Know then he shall remain without a grave.

ANT. I will inter him, though the state forbid.

CRE. You shall be buried with him.

ANT. For two friends  
'Twere glorious in their death to be united.

CRE. Seize and convey her home.

ANT. I will not loose  
My hold, nor shall ye tear me from his body.

CRE. O virgin, the decrees of fate are such  
As thwart your wayward views.

ANT. It is decreed,  
No insults shall be offered to the dead.

CRE. Over this corse let none presume to strew  
The moistened dust.

ANT. Thee, Creon, I implore  
By my loved mother, by Jocasta's shade.

CRE. In vain are your entreaties : such request  
I cannot grant.

ANT. But suffer me to lave  
The body—

CRE. I this interdict must add  
To those which through the city are proclaimed.

ANT. And close with bandages his gaping wounds.

CRE. To his remains no honours shall you pay.

ANT. Yet, O my dearest brother, on thy lips  
This kiss will I imprint.

CRE. Nor by these plaints  
Make your espousals wretched.

ANT. Dar'st thou think  
That I will ever live to wed thy son?



CRE. You by necessity's superior force  
Will be constrained. For how can you escape  
The nuptial bond?

ANT. I on that night will act  
Like one of Danaus' daughters.

CRE. Marked ye not  
How boldly, with what arrogance she spoke?

ANT. Bear witness, O my dagger, to the oath.

CRE. Why from this wedlock wish you to be freed?

ANT. My miserable father in his flight  
I will attend.

CRE. A generous soul is yours,  
Abundant folly too.

ANT. I am resolved  
To share his death; of that, too, be assured.

CRE. Go, leave this realm: you shall not slay my son.  
[Exit CREON.]

ÆD. Thee, for thy zeal, my daughter, I applaud.

ANT. How can I wed, while you my father roam  
A solitary exile?

ÆD. To enjoy  
Thy better fortunes, stay thou here: my woes  
I will endure with patience.

ANT. Who, my sire,  
Shall minister to you deprived of sight?

ÆD. I, in whatever field the fates ordain  
That I shall fall, must lie.

ANT. Where's Ædipus,  
And that famed riddle?

ÆD. Lost, for ever lost:  
My prosperous fortunes from one single day,  
And from one day my ruin I derive.

ANT. May not I also be allowed to take  
A part in your afflictions?

ÆD. 'Twere unseemly  
For thee, my daughter, from this land to roam  
With thy blind father.

ANT. To a virtuous maid  
Not base, my sire, but noble.



ANT. I am indeed of all the Theban maids  
The most unhappy.

ÆD. My decrepit feet  
Where shall I place ? O daughter, with a staff  
Furnish this hand.

ANT. Come hither, O my sire.  
Here rest your feet : for, like an empty dream,  
Your strength is but mere semblance.

ÆD. Grievous exile.  
A weak old man, he from his native land  
Drives forth. My sufferings are, alas ! most dreadful.

ANT. What is there in the sufferings you complain of  
Peculiarly distressful ? Doth not justice  
Behold the sinner, and with penal strictness  
Each foolish action of mankind repay ?

ÆD. Still am I he whom the victorious Muse  
Exalted to the skies when I explained  
The dark enigma by that fiend proposed.

ANT. Why speak of the renown which you obtained  
When you o'ercame the Sphinx ? Cease to recount  
Past happiness. For, O my sire, this curse  
Awaited you, an exile from your country  
To die we know not where. My virgin comrades  
Leaving to wail my absence, I depart,  
Far from my native land ordained to roam  
Unlike a bashful maid.

ÆD. How is thy soul  
With matchless generosity endued !

ANT. Such conduct 'midst my father's woes shall  
make

My name illustrious. Yet am I unhappy  
Through the foul scorn with which they treat my brother,  
Whose weltering corse without these gates is thrown  
Unburied. His remains, ill-fated youth,  
Though death should be the punishment, with earth  
I privately will cover, O my sire.

ÆD. Go join thy comrades.

ANT. With loud complaints enough  
Have I assailed the ear of every friend.

ÆD. But at the altars thou must offer up  
Thy supplications.

ANT.                                They with my distress  
Are satiated.

ÆD.                                To Bacchus' temple then  
Repair, on that steep mountain where no step  
Profane invades his orgies, chosen haunt  
Of his own Mænades.

ANT.                                Erst in the hides  
Of Theban stags arrayed, I on these hills  
Joined in the dance of Semele, bestowing  
A homage they approved not on the gods.

ÆD. Illustrious citizens of Thebes, behold  
That Ædipus, who the enigma solved—  
The first of men when I had singly quelled  
The Sphinx's ruthless power, but now o'erwhelmed  
With infamy, I from this land am driven  
A miserable exile. But why groan,  
Why utter fruitless plaints? For man is bound  
To bear the doom which righteous Heaven awards.

CHOR. O venerable victory, take possession  
Of my whole life, nor ever cease to twine  
Around these brows thy laureate wreath divine.

# THE SUPPLIANTS.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ÆTHRA.	EVADNE.
CHORUS OF ARGIVE MATRONS.	IPHIS.
THESEUS.	A BOY, <i>supposed to be</i> MELOX, <i>the</i>
ADRASTUS.	<i>son of</i> ETEOCLUS.
HERALD.	MINERVA.
MESSENGER.	

SCENE—THE TEMPLE OF CERES, AT ELEUSINE, IN THE  
ATHENIAN TERRITORY.

ÆTHRA, CHORUS, ADRASTUS.

ÆT. Thou guardian power of Eleusine's land,  
O Ceres, and ye venerable priests  
Of that benignant goddess, who attend  
This temple, blessings for myself I crave,  
For my son Theseus, Athens, and the realm  
Of Pitheus, who, when his paternal care  
Had reared my childhood in a wealthy house,  
Gave me to Ægeus, to Pandion's son ;  
So Phœbus' oracles decreed. These prayers  
I offered up when I yon aged matrons  
Beheld, who their abodes at Argos leave,  
And with their suppliant branches at my knees  
Fall prostrate, having suffered dreadful woes :  
Now are they childless ; for before the gates  
Of Thebes were slain their seven illustrious sons,  
Whom erst Adrastus, King of Argos, led  
To battle, when for exiled Polynices,

His son-in-law, he strove to gain a share  
 Of *Ædipus*' inheritance. The corpses  
 Of those who by the hostile spear were slain  
 Their mothers would consign to earth ; but, spurning  
 The laws which righteous Heaven ordained, the victors  
 Will not allow them to remove the dead.  
 But needing equally with them my succour  
*Adrastus*, shedding many a tear, lies stretched  
 On earth, bewailing the disastrous fate  
 Of those brave troops whom he to battle led.  
 Oft he conjures me to implore my son,  
 Either by treaty, or his forceful spear,  
 Back from those hostile fields to bring the slain  
 And lodge them in a tomb: on him alone  
 And Athens he this honourable task  
 Imposes. Hither were the victims borne,  
 That we a prosperous tillage may obtain,  
 And for this cause I from my house am come  
 Into this temple, where the bearded grain  
 First rising from the fruitful soil appeared.  
 Holding loose sprays of foliage in my hand,  
 I wait before the unpolluted altars  
 Of *Proserpine* and *Ceres* ; for these mothers,  
 Grown hoar with age and of their children reft,  
 With pity moved, and to the sacred branches  
 Yielding a due respect. I to the city  
 Have sent a herald to call *Theseus* hither,  
 That from the Theban land he may remove  
 The causes of their sorrow, or the gods  
 Appeasing by some pious rites, release me  
 From the constraint these suppliant dames impose.  
 In all emergencies discretion bids  
 Our feeble sex to seek man's needful aid.

CHOR. An aged woman prostrate at thy knees,  
 Thee I implore my children to redeem,  
 Who welter on a foreign plain, unnerved  
 By death and to the savage beasts a prey :  
 Thou see'st the piteous tears which from these eyes  
 Unbidden start, and torn with desperate hands

My wrinkled flesh    What hope remains for me,  
 Who neither, at my home, have been allowed  
 The corse of my children to stretch forth,  
 Nor, heaped with earth, behold their tombs arise?  
 Thou, too, illustrious dame, hast borne a son  
 Crowning the utmost wishes of thy lord,  
 Speak, therefore, what thou think'st of our distress,  
 In language suited to the griefs I feel  
 For the deceased whom I brought forth; persuade  
 Thy son, whose succour we implore, to march  
 Across Ismenos' channel, and consign  
 To me the bodies of the slaughtered youths,  
 That I beneath the monumental stone  
 May bury them with every sacred rite.  
 Though not by mere necessity constrained,  
 We at thy knees fall down and urge our suit  
 Before these altars of the gods, where smokes  
 The frequent incense: for our cause is just:  
 And through the prosperous fortunes of thy son,  
 With power sufficient to remove our woes  
 Art thou endued: but since the ills I suffer  
 Thy pity claim, a miserable suppliant,  
 I crave that to these arms thou wouldst restore  
 My son, and grant me to embrace his corse.

## ODE.

## I.

ÆT. Here a fresh group of mourners stands,  
 Your followers in succession wring their hands.

CHOR. Attune expressive notes of anguish,  
       O ye sympathetic choir,  
 And in harmonious accents languish,  
       Such as Pluto loves t' inspire.  
 Tear those cheeks of pallid hue,  
       And let gore your bosoms stain,  
 For from the living is such honour due  
       To the shades of heroes slain,  
 Whose corsees welter on th' embattled plain.

## II.

I feel a pleasing sad relief,  
 Unsated as I brood o'er scenes of grief;  
 My lamentations, never ending,  
 Are like the moisture of the sea  
 In drops from some high rock descending,  
 Which flows to all eternity.  
 For those youths who breathe no more  
 Nature bids the mother weep,  
 And with incessant tears their loss deplore :  
 In oblivion would I steep  
 My woes, and welcome death's perpetual sleep.

THESEUS. ÆTHRA, ADRASTUS, CHORUS.

THE. What plaints are these I hear? Who strike their  
 breasts

Attuning lamentations for the dead  
 In such loud notes as issue from the fane?  
 Borne hither by my fears with wingéd speed,  
 I come to see if any recent ill  
 May have befallen my mother; she from home  
 Hath long been absent. Ha! what objects new  
 And strange are these which now mine eyes behold?  
 Fresh questions hence arise: my aged mother  
 Close to the altar seated with a band  
 Of foreign matrons, who their woes express  
 In various warbled notes, and on the ground,  
 Shed from their venerable eyes a stream  
 Of tears: their heads are shorn, nor is their garb  
 Suited to those who tend the sacred rites?  
 What means all this? My mother, say; from you  
 I wait for information, and expect  
 Some tidings of importance.

ÆT.

O my son,

These are the mothers of those seven famed chiefs  
 Who perished at the gates of Thebes: you see  
 How they with suppliant branches on all sides  
 Encompass me.



THE. But who is he who groans  
So piteously, stretched forth before the gate?

ÆT. Adrastus, they inform me, king of Argos.

THE. Are they who stand around those matrons' sons?

ÆT. Not theirs; they are the children of the slain.

THE. Why with those suppliant tokens in their hands  
Come they to us?

ÆT. I know: but it behoves  
Them, O my son, their errand to unfold.

THE. To thee who in a fleecy cloak art wrapped,  
My questions I address: thy head unveil,  
Cease to lament, and speak; for while thy tongue  
Utters no accent nought canst thou obtain.

ADR. O king of the Athenian land, renowned  
For your victorious arms, to you, O Theseus,  
And to your city, I a suppliant come.

THE. What's thy pursuit, and what is it thou need'st?

ADR. Know you not how ill-fated was the host  
I led?

THE. Thou didst not pass through Greece in silence.

ADR. The noblest youths of Argos there I lost.

THE. Such dire effects from luckless war arise.

ADR. From Thebes I claimed the bodies of the slain.

THE. Didst thou rely on heralds to procure  
Leave to inter the dead?

ADR. But they who slew them  
Deny this favour.

THE. What can they allege  
'Gainst a request which justice must approve?

ADR. Ask not the reason: they are now elate  
With a success they know not how to bear.

THE. Art thou come hither to consult me then,  
Or on what errand?

ADR. 'Tis my wish, O Theseus,  
That you the sons of Argos would redeem.

THE. But where is Argos now? Were all her boasts  
Of no effect?

ADR. We by this one defeat  
Are ruined, and to you for succour come.

THE. This on thy private judgment, or the voice  
Of the whole city?

ADR. All the race of Danaus  
Implore you to inter the slain.

THE. Why led'st thou  
'Gainst Thebes seven squadrons?

ADR. To confer a favour  
On my two sons-in-law.

THE. To what brave chiefs  
Of Argos didst thou give thy daughters' hands?

ADR. My family in wedlock I with those  
Of our own nation joined not.

THE. Didst thou yield  
Those Argive damsels to some foreign bridegrooms?

ADR. To Tydeus, and to Polynices, sprung  
From Theban sires.

THE. What dotage could induce thee  
To form alliances like these?

ADR. Dark riddles  
Phœbus propounded, which my judgment swayed.

THE. Such union for the virgins to prescribe,  
What said Apollo?

ADR. That I must bestow  
My daughters on the lion and the boar.

THE. But how didst thou interpret this response  
Of the prophetic god?

ADR. By night two exiles  
Came to my door.

THE. Say, who and who : thou speak'st  
Of both at once.

ADR. Together Tydeus fought  
And Polynices.

THE. Hence didst thou on them  
As on ferocious beasts bestow thy daughters?

ADR. Their combat that of savages I deemed.

THE. Why did they leave their native land?

ADR. Thence fled  
Tydeus polluted with his brother's gore.

THE. But why did (Edipus' son forsake  
The Theban realm?

ADR.                   The curses of his sire  
Thence drove him, lest his brother he should slay.

THE. A prudent cause for this spontaneous exile  
Hast thou assigned.

ADR.                   But they who stayed at home  
Oppressed the absent.

THE.                   Did his brother rob him  
Of the inheritance?

ADR.                   I to decide  
This contest went, and hence am I undone.

THE. Didst thou consult the seers, and from the altar  
Behold the flames of sacrifice ascend?

ADR. Alas ! you urge me on that very point  
Where most I failed.

THE.                   Thou led'st thy troops, it seems,  
Although the gods approved not, to the field.

ADR. Yet more, Amphiaraus opposed our march.

THE. Didst thou thus lightly thwart the will of  
Heaven?

ADR. I by the clamorous zeal of younger men  
Was hurried on.

THE.                   Regardless of discretion,  
Thy courage thou didst follow.

ADR.                   Many a chief  
Hath such misconduct utterly destroyed.  
But O most dauntless of the Grecian race,  
Monarch of the Athenian realm ; I blush,  
Thus prostrate on the ground, to clasp your knees,  
Grown grey with age, and once a happy king !  
But I to my calamities must yield.

Redeem the dead, in pity to my woes,  
And to these mothers of their sons bereft,  
To whom the burdens which on hoary age  
Attend are added to their childless state.  
Yet hither they endured to come, and tread  
A foreign soil, though their decrepit feet  
Could hardly move : the embassy they bring  
Hath no connection with the mystic rites  
Of Ceres ; all they crave is to inter  
The slain, as they at their mature decease

Would from their sons such honours have obtained.  
 'Tis wisdom in the opulent to look  
 With pity on the sorrows of the poor,  
 And in the poor man to look up to those  
 Who have abundant riches, as examples  
 For him to imitate, and thence acquire  
 A wish his own possessions to improve.  
 They too who are with prosperous fortunes blest  
 Should feel a prudent dread of future woes ;  
 And let the bard who frames the harmonious strain  
 Exert his genius in a cheerful hour,  
 For if his own sensations are unlike  
 Those which he speaks of, never can the wretch  
 Who by affliction is at home opprest  
 Give joy to others : there's no ground for this.  
 But you perhaps will ask me : " Passing o'er  
 The land of Pelops, why would you impose  
 Such toil on the Athenians ? " This reply  
 Have I a right to make : " The Spartan realm  
 Is prone to cruelty, and in its manners  
 Too variable ; its other states are small  
 And destitute of strength ; your city only  
 To this emprise is equal, for 'tis wont  
 To pity the distressed, and hath in you  
 A valiant king ; for want of such a chief  
 Have many cities perished."

CHOR. I address thee  
 In the same language ; to our woes, O Theseus,  
 Extend thy pity.

THE. I with others erst  
 Have on this subject held a strong dispute ;  
 For some there are who say the ills which wait  
 On man exceed his joys ; but I maintain  
 The contrary opinion, that our lives  
 More bliss than woe experience. For if this  
 Were not the fact, we could not still continue  
 To view the sun. That god, whoe'er he was,  
 I praise, who severed mortals from a life  
 Of wild confusion and of brutal force,

Implanting reason first, and then a tongue  
That might by sounds articulate proclaim  
Our thoughts, bestowing fruit for food, and drops  
Of rain descending from the skies, to nourish  
Earth's products and refresh the thirst of man,  
Yet more, fit coverings, from the wintry cold  
To guard us, and Hyperion's scorching rays ;  
The art of sailing o'er the briny deep,  
That we by commerce may supply the wants  
Of distant regions, to these gifts by Heaven  
Is added ; things the most obscure, and placed  
Beyond our knowledge, can the seer foretell,  
By gazing on the flames which from the altar  
Ascend the skies, the entrails of the victims,  
And flight of birds. Are we not then puffed up  
With vanity, if, when the gods bestow  
Conveniences like these on life, we deem  
Their bounty insufficient ? Our conceit  
Is such, we aim to be more strong than Jove :  
Though pride of soul be all that we possess,  
We in our own opinion are more wise  
Than th' immortal powers. To me thou seem'st  
One of this number, O thou wretch devoid  
Of reason, to Apollo's mystic voice  
Yielding blind deference, who thy daughters gav'st  
To foreign lords, as if the gods were swayed  
By human passions. Thy illustrious blood  
With foul pollution mingling, thine own house  
Thus hast thou wounded. Never should the wise  
In leagues of inauspicious wedlock yoke  
Just and unjust : but prosperous friends obtain  
Against the hour of danger. Jove, to all  
One common fate dispensing, oft involves  
In the calamities which guilt draws down  
Upon the sinner him who ne'er transgressed.  
But thou, by leading forth that Argive host  
To battle, though the seers in vain forbade,  
Despising each oracular response,  
And wilfully regardless of the gods,

Hast caused thy country's ruin, overruled  
By those young men who place their sole delight  
In glory, and promote unrighteous wars,  
Corrupting a whole city; this aspires  
To the command of armies, by the pomp  
Attending those who hold the reins of power  
A second is corrupted; some there are  
Studious of filthy lucre, who regard not  
What mischief to the public may ensue.  
Three ranks there are of citizens: the rich,  
Useless, and ever grasping after more;  
While they, who have no property, and lack  
E'en necessary food, by fierce despair  
And envy actuated, send forth their stings  
Against the wealthy, by th' insidious tongue  
Of some malignant demagogue beguiled;  
But of these three the middle rank consists  
Of those who save their country, and enforce  
Each wholesome usage which the state ordains.  
Shall I then be thy champion? What pretence  
That would sound honourably can I allege  
To gain my countrymen? Depart in peace!  
For baleful are the counsels thou hast given  
That we should urge prosperity too far.

CHOR. He did amiss: but the great error rests  
On those young men, and he deserves thy pardon.

ADR. I have not chosen you to be the judge  
Of my afflictions, but to you, O king,  
As a physician come: nor, if convicted  
Of having done amiss, to an avenger  
Or an opprobrious censor, but a friend  
Who will afford his help: if you refuse  
To act this generous part, to your decision  
I must submit: for what resource have I?  
But, O ye venerable dames, retire,  
Leaving those verdant branches here behind,  
And call to witness the celestial powers,  
The fruitful earth with Ceres lifting high  
Her torch, and that exhaustless source of light,

The sun, that we by all the gods in vain  
 Conjured you. (It is pious to relieve  
 Those who unjustly suffer, and the tears  
 Of these your hapless kindred are you bound  
 To reverence, for your mother was the daughter  
 Of Pitheus.) Pelops' son, born in that land  
 Which bears the name of Pelops, we partake  
 One origin with you : will you betray  
 These sacred ties, and from your realm cast forth  
 Yon hoary suppliants, nor allow the boon  
 Which at your hands they merit ? Act not thus ;  
 For in the rocks hath the wild beast a place  
 Of refuge, in the altars of the gods  
 The slave : a city harassed by the storm  
 Flies to some neighbouring city : for there's nought  
 On earth that meets with everlasting bliss.

CHOR. Rise, hapless woman, from this hallowed fane  
 Of Proserpine, to meet him ; clasp his knees,  
 Entreat him to bestow funereal rites  
 On our slain sons, whom in the bloom of youth  
 Beneath the walls of Thebes I lost : my friends  
 Lift from the ground, support me, bear along,  
 Stretch forth these miserable, these aged hands.  
 Thee, O thou most beloved and most renowned  
 Of Grecian chiefs, I by that beard conjure,  
 While at thy knees, thus prostrate on the ground,  
 I for my sons, a wretched suppliant sue,  
 Or, like some helpless vagabond, pour forth  
 The warbled lamentation. Generous youth,  
 Thee I entreat ; let not my sons, whose age  
 Was but the same as thine, in Thebes remain  
 Unburied, for the sport of savage beasts !  
 Behold what tears stream from these swimming eyes,  
 As thus I kneel before thee, to procure  
 For my slain sons an honourable grave.

THE. Why, O my mother, do you shed the tear,  
 Covering your eyes with that transparent veil ?  
 Is it because you heard their plaints ? I too  
 Am much affected. Raise your hoary head,

Nor weep while seated at the holy altar  
Of Ceres.

ÆT. Ah !

THE. You ought not thus to groan  
For their afflictions.

ÆT. O ye wretched dames !

THE. You are not one of them.

ÆT. Shall I propose  
A scheme, my son, your glory to increase,  
And that of Athens ?

THE. Wisdom oft hath flowed  
From female lips.

ÆT. I meditated words  
Of such importance, that they make me pause.

THE. You speak amiss, we from our friends should hide  
Nought that is useful.

ÆT. If I now were mute  
Myself hereafter might I justly blame  
For keeping a dishonourable silence,  
Nor through the fear lest eloquence should prove  
Of no effect, when issuing from the mouth  
Of a weak woman, will I thus forego  
An honourable task. My son, I first  
Exhort you to regard the will of Heaven,  
Lest through neglect you err, else will you fail  
In this one point, though you in all beside  
Think rightly. I moreover still had kept  
My temper calm, if to redress the wrongs  
Which they endure an enterprising soul  
Had not been requisite. But now, my son,  
A field of glory opens to your view,  
Nor these bold counsels scruple I to urge  
That by your conquering arm you would compel  
Those men of violence, who from the slain  
Withhold their just inheritance a tomb,  
Such necessary duty to perform,  
And quell those impious miscreants who confound  
The usages established through all Greece :  
For the firm bond which peopled cities holds



In union is th' observance of the laws.  
But some there are who will assert "that fear  
Effeminately caused thee to forego  
Those wreaths of fame thy country might have gained :  
Erst with a bristled monster of the woods  
Didst thou engage, nor shun th' inglorious strife :  
But now called forth to face the burnished helm  
And pointed spear art found to be a dastard."  
Let not my son act thus : your native land,  
Which for a want of prudence hath been scorned.  
You see, tremendous as a gorgon, rear  
Its front against the scorner : for it grows  
Under the pressure of severest toils.  
The deeds of peaceful cities are obscure,  
And caution bounds their views. Will you not march,  
My son, to succour the illustrious dead,  
And these afflicted matrons ? For their safety  
I fear not, while with justice you go forth  
To battle. Though I now on Cadmus' sons  
Behold auspicious fortune smile, I trust  
They will ere long experience the reverse  
Of her unstable die : for she o'eturns  
All that is great and glorious.

CHOR.                                Dearest Æthra,  
Well didst thou plead Adrastus' cause and mine :  
Hence twofold joy I feel.

THE. He hath deserved,  
O mother, the severe reproofs which flowed  
From my indignant tongue, and I my thoughts  
Of those pernicious counsels whence arose  
His ruin have expressed. Yet I perceive  
What you suggest, that ill would it become  
The character I have maintained to fly  
From danger. After many glorious deeds  
Achieved among the Greeks, I chose this office,  
An exemplary punishment t' inflict  
On all the wicked. Therefore from no toils  
Can I shrink back, for what would those who hate me  
Have to allege, when you who gave me birth.

And tremble for my safety, are the first  
 Who bid me enter on the bold emprise?  
 I on this errand go, and will redeem  
 The dead by words persuasive, or, if words  
 Are ineffectual, with protended spear,  
 And in an instant, if the envious gods  
 Refuse not their assistance. But I wish  
 That the whole city may a sanction give:  
 They to my pleasure their assent would yield;  
 But to the scheme, if I propose it first  
 To be debated, I shall find the people  
 More favourable: for them I made supreme,  
 And on this city, with an equal right  
 For all to vote, its freedom have bestowed.  
 Taking Adrastus with me for a proof  
 Of my assertions, 'midst the crowd I'll go,  
 And when I have persuaded them, collecting  
 A chosen squadron of Athenian youths,  
 Hither return, and, halting under arms,  
 To Creon send a message to request  
 The bodies of the slain. But from my mother,  
 Ye aged dames, those holy boughs remove,  
 That I may take her by that much-loved hand,  
 And to the royal dome of Ægeus lead.  
 Vile is that son who to his parents yields  
 No grateful services, for from his children  
 He who such glorious tribute pays receives  
 Whate'er through filial duty he bestowed.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

O Argos, famed for steeds, my native plain,  
 Sure thou, with all Pelasgia's wide domain,  
 Hast heard the king's benevolent design,  
 And wilt in grateful strains revere the powers divine.

I. 2.

May Theseus put an end to all my woes,  
 Rescuing those bloody corpses from our foes

Still objects of maternal love ; his aid  
Shall by th' Inachian realm's attachment be repaid.

## II. 1.

To pious deeds belongs a mighty name,  
And cities saved procure eternal fame.  
Will he do this—with us in friendship join,  
And to the peaceful tomb our slaughtered sons consign ?

## II. 2.

Minerva's town, support a mother's cause,  
Thou from pollution canst preserve the laws  
Which man holds sacred, thou rever'st the right,  
Sett'st the afflicted free, and quell'st outrageous might.

## THESEUS, ADRASTUS, CHORUS.

THE. [*to a HERALD.*] Thou, always practising this art,  
has served

Thy city, and to various regions borne  
My embassies : when, therefore, thou hast crossed  
Asopus, and Ismenos' stream, address  
The Theban monarch in these courteous words :  
"Theseus, who dwells in an adjacent realm,  
And hath a right such favour to receive,  
Requests you as a friend t' inter the dead,  
And gain the love of all Erectheus' race :"  
To this petition if they yield assent,  
Come back again in peace : if they refuse,  
Thy second message shall be this : "My band  
Of chosen youths in glittering mail arrayed  
They must expect : for at the sacred fount  
Callichore e'en now the assembled host  
Halts under arms, prepared for instant fight."  
For in this arduous enterprise, with zeal  
The city of its own accord engaged,  
When they perceived my wish. But who intrudes  
E'en while I am yet speaking ? He appears  
To be a Theban herald, though I doubt it.  
Stay ; for thy errand he may supersede,  
And by his coming obviate my designs.

THEBAN HERALD, THESEUS, ADRASTUS, CHORUS.

THE. HER. Who is the sovereign ruler of this land?  
To whom must I unfold the message sent  
By Creon, who presides o'er the domains  
Of Cadmus, since before Thebes' sevenfold gates,  
Slain by his brother Polynices' hand,  
Eteocles expired?

THE. With an untruth  
Thy speech. O stranger, hast thou oped by asking  
For a king here : for Athens, this free city,  
By no one man is governed, but the people  
Rule in succession year by year ; to wealth  
No preference is allowed, but the poor man  
An equal share of empire doth possess.

THE. HER. By yielding up this point, to me you  
grant

Advantage such as equals the first throw  
At dice : the city whence I came is ruled  
By one man only, not by multitudes ;  
No crafty orator with specious words  
For his own interest turns the wavering minds  
Of its inhabitants, this moment dear  
To all around and lavish of his favours,  
The next a public bane, yet he conceals  
By some fresh calumny his errors past,  
And 'scapes the stroke of justice. How can they  
Who no sound judgments form, the people, guide  
A city well? For time instead of haste  
Affords the best instructions. But the man  
Who tills the ground, by poverty deprest,  
If to that poverty he add the want  
Of due experience, through the manual toils  
He is engaged in, to the public good  
Can ne'er look up. Those too of noble birth  
Are much disgusted when the worthless hold  
Posts of the highest rank, and he who erst  
Was nothing with his tongue beguiles the crowd.

THE. This witty herald to his message adds

The flowers of eloquence. But on this strife  
Since thou hast entered, hear me ; for 'twas thou  
That gav'st the challenge to debate. No curse  
Is greater to a city than a king.  
For first, where'er no laws exist which bind  
The whole community, and one man rules,  
Upon his arbitrary will alone  
Depend the laws, and all thy rights are lost.  
But under written laws the poor and rich  
An equal justice find ; and if reproached,  
They of low station may with equal scorn  
Answer the taunting arrogance of wealth ;  
And an inferior, if his cause be just,  
Conquers the powerful. This too is a mark  
Of freedom, where the man who can propose  
Some wholesome counsel for the public weal  
Is by the herald called upon to speak :  
Then he who with a generous zeal accepts  
Such offer gains renown, but he who likes not  
His thoughts to utter still continues mute.  
How can a city be administered  
With more equality ? Where'er the people  
Are sovereigns of the land, a rising race  
Of heroes gives them joy ; but these a king  
Esteems his foes ; the brave, with those who bear  
The character of wise, he slays, still trembling  
For his ill-gotten power. How can that city  
On a firm basis stand where valiant youths,  
Like the green sheaf cut from the vernal mead,  
Are in their bloom mown down ? Why then acquire  
Large fortunes for our children, to augment  
The treasures of a king ? Or why train up  
Our virgin daughters with an anxious care,  
Merely to gratify the loose desires  
Of an imperious monarch, and cause tears  
To stream from their fond parents ? May I end  
My life ere these indignant eyes behold  
The violation of my daughter's honour !  
Thus far in answer to thy speech. Now say,



Its ruin to a frantic lust for war.  
We all know how to choose the better part,  
Distinguish good from ill, and are aware  
That peace, the benefactress of mankind,  
Is preferable to war ; by every Muse  
Held justly dear, and to the fiends of hell  
A foe, in population she delights,  
And wealth abundant. But, these blessings slighting,  
We wickedly embark in needless wars ;  
A man to servitude consigns the man  
His arms subdued, on city the same doom  
City imposes. But you aid our foes  
E'en after they are dead, and would inter  
With pomp funereal those who owe their fate  
To their own arrogance. Forsooth, you deem  
That justice was infringed, when smoked the body  
Of frantic Capaneus, by thunder smitten,  
Upon that ladder, which he at the gates  
Erecting, swore he would lay waste our city,  
Or with dread Jove's consent or in despite  
Of the vindictive god : nor should th' abyss  
Have snatched away that Augur, swallowing up  
His chariot in the caverns of the earth :  
Nor was it fitting that those other chiefs  
Should at the gates lie breathless, with their limbs  
Disjointed by huge stones ; boast that your wisdom  
Transcends e'en that of Jove himself, or own  
The gods may punish sinners. It behoves  
Those who are wise to love their children first,  
Their aged parents next, and native land,  
Whose growing fortunes they are bound to improve,  
And not dismember it. In him who leads  
A host, or pilot stationed at the helm,  
Rashness is dangerous : he who by discretion  
His conduct regulates desists in time,  
And caution I esteem the truest valour.

ADR. The vengeance Jove inflicted on our crimes  
Should have sufficed : but it behoves not thee,  
Thou most abandoned miscreant, to insult us  
With contumelious words.





Cover the dead? What mischiefs can ensue?  
 Will they, when buried, undermine your walls,  
 Or in earth's hollow caves beget a race  
 Of children able to avenge their wrongs?  
 Absurdly hast thou lavished many words  
 In base and groundless terrors. O ye fools,  
 Go make yourselves acquainted with the woes  
 To which mankind are subject. Human life  
 Is but a conflict : some there are whose bliss  
 Approaches them, while that of others waits  
 Till a long future season, others taste  
 Of present joys : capricious Fortune sports  
 With all her anxious votaries : through a hope  
 Of better times to her the wretched pay  
 Their homage ; he who is already blest  
 Extols her matchless bounty to the skies,  
 And trembles lest the veering gale forsake him.  
 But we, who know by what precarious tenure  
 We hold her gifts, should bear a trifling wrong  
 With patience, and, if we the narrow bounds  
 Of justice overleap, abstain from crimes  
 Which harm our country. If thou ask, what means  
 This prelude? I reply : To us who wish  
 To see them laid in earth with holy rites,  
 Consign the weltering corpses of the slain.  
 Else is it clear what mischiefs must ensue,  
 I will go forth, and bury them by force.  
 For 'mong the Greeks it never shall be said  
 This ancient law, which from the gods received  
 Its sanction, though transmitted down to me  
 And to the city where Pandion ruled,  
 Was disregarded.

CHOR.            Courage ! While the light  
 Of justice is thy guide, thou shalt escape  
 Th' invidious censures of a busy crowd.

THE. HER. May I comprise in a few words the  
    whole  
 Of our debate?

THE                    Speak whatsoe'er thou wilt :  
 For no discreet restraint thy tongue e'er knew.

THE. HER. The corpses of those Argive youths from Thebes  
You never shall remove.

THE. Now to my answer  
Attend, if thou art so disposed.

THE. HER. I will:  
For in your turn I ought to hear you speak.

THE. On the deceased will I bestow a grave,  
When I have borne their relics from the land  
Washed by Asopus' stream.

THE. HER. In combat first  
Great hazards must you brave.

THE. Unnumbered toils  
Have I ere now in other wars endured.

THE. HER. Was there to you transmitted from your sire  
Sufficient strength to cope with every foe?

THE. With every villain: for on virtuous deeds  
No punishment would I inflict.

THE. HER. Both you  
And Athens have been wont in various matters  
To interfere.

THE. To many a bold emprise  
She owes the prosperous fortunes she enjoys.

THE. HER. Come on, that soon as you attempt to enter  
Our gates the Theban lance may lay you low.

THE. Can any valiant champion from the teeth  
Of a slain dragon spring?

THE. HER. This to your cost  
Shall you experience, though you still retain  
The rashness which untutored youth inspires.

THE. By thy presumptuous language thou my soul  
To anger canst not rouse: but from this land  
Depart, and carry back those empty words  
With which thou hither cam'st: for we in vain  
Have held this conference. [Exit THEBAN HERALD.

Now must we collect  
Our numerous infantry in arms arrayed,  
With all who mount the chariot, and the steed  
Caparisoned, his mouth distilling foam,  
Urge to the Theban realm; for I will march

Up to the sevenfold gates by Cadmus reared  
 This arm sustaining a protended spear,  
 And be myself the herald. But stay here,  
 Adrastus, I command thee ; nor with mine  
 Blend thy disastrous fortunes : for the host  
 I under happier auspices will lead  
 To the embattled field, renowned in war,  
 And furnished with the spear to which I owe  
 My glories. I need only one thing more,  
 Help from the gods, who are the friends of justice :  
 For where all these advantages concur  
 They to our better cause ensure success.  
 But valour's of no service to mankind  
 Unless propitious Jove his influence lend.

[Exit THESEUS.]

ADR. Unhappy mothers of those hapless chiefs,  
 How doth pale fear di-turb this anxious breast !

CHOR. What new alarm is this thou giv'st ?

ADR. The host  
 Of Pallas our great contest will decide.

CHOR. By force of arms, or conference, dost thou mean ?

ADR. 'Twere better thus ; but slaughter, the delight  
 Of Mars, and battle, through the Theban streets,  
 With many a beaten bosom shall resound.

CHOR. Wretch that I am ! What cause shall I assign  
 For such calamities ?

ADR. But some reverse  
 Of fortune may again lay low the man  
 Who, swollen with gay prosperity, exults ;  
 This gives me confidence.

CHOR. Th' immortal gods  
 Thou represent'st as if those gods were just.

ADR. For who but they o'er each event preside ?

CHOR. Heaven's partial dispensations to mankind  
 I oft contemplate.

ADR. Thou thy better judgment  
 To thy past fears dost sacrifice. Revenge  
 Calls forth revenge, and slaughter is repaid  
 By slaughter ; for the gods into the souls

Of evil men pernicious thoughts infuse,  
And all things to their destined period guide.

## ODE.

## I.

CHOR. O could I reach yon field with turrets crowned  
And leave thy spring Callichore behind.

ADR. Heaven give thee pinions to outstrip the wind !

CHOR. Waft me to Thebes for its two streams renowned.

ADR. There might'st thou view the spirits of the slain  
Whose corpses welter on the hostile plain.

Still dubious are the dread awards of fate.

But the undaunted king of this domain,

In yon embattled field what dangers may await.

## II.

CHOR. On you, ye pitying gods, again I call,  
In you my trust I place, your might revere,  
And with this hope dispel each anxious fear.  
O Jove, whom love's soft bandage did enthrall,  
When beauteous Io met thy fond embrace,  
Erst to a heifer changed, from whom we trace  
Our origin, make Argos still thy care.  
Thy image rescuing from its loathed disgrace,  
To the funereal pyre these heroes will we bear

## MESSENGER, ADRASTUS, CHORUS.

MES. With many acceptable tidings fraught  
I come, ye dames, and am myself just 'scaped  
(For I was taken prisoner in that battle,  
When the seven squadrons, led by the deceased,  
Upon the banks of Dirce's current fought) ;  
It is my joyful errand to relate  
The conquest Theseus gained : but your fatigue  
Of asking tedious questions will I spare ;  
For to that Capaneus, th' ill-fated chief  
Whom Jove with flaming thunderbolts transpierced,  
Was I a servant.

CHOR. O my friend, you bring  
A favourable account of your return,  
And Theseus' mighty deeds : but if the host  
Of generous Athens too be safe, most welcome  
Will be the whole of what you now relate.

MES. 'Tis safe ; and what Adrastus strove t' effect,  
When from the stream of Inachus he led  
His forces, and against the Theban towers  
Waged war, is now accomplished.

CHOR. But relate  
How Ægeus' son with his intrepid comrades  
Jove's trophies reared, for you th' engagement saw,  
And us who were not there can entertain.

MES. In a right line the solar beams began  
To strike the earth ; upon a tower I stood  
Commanding a wide prospect o'er the field,  
Above the gate Electra. Thence I marked  
The warriors of three tribes to the assault  
Advancing in three several bands, arrayed  
In ponderous armour, to Ismenos' stream  
The first division, I am told, its ranks  
Extended ; the illustrious son of Ægeus,  
Their monarch, was among them ; round their chief  
The natives of Cecropia's ancient realm  
Were stationed ; the Paraiians, armed with spears,  
Close to the fount of Mars ; on either flank  
Of battle stood the cavalry disposed  
In equal numbers, and the brazen cars  
Screened by Amphion's venerable tomb.  
Meanwhile the Theban forces were drawn forth  
Without the bulwarks, placing in their rear  
The bodies which they fought for : fiery steed  
To steed ; to chariot, chariot stood opposed.  
But Theseus' herald, in a voice so loud  
That all might hear, cried out, " Be mute, ye people ;  
Attend in strictest silence, O ye troops  
Who spring from Cadmus ! We are come to claim  
The bodies of the slain, which 'tis our wish  
To bury, in compliance with the laws

Established through all Greece : we for their deaths  
Require not an atonement." To these words  
No answer by his herald Creon gave,  
Firm under arms the silent warrior stood.  
They who the reins of adverse chariots held  
Began the battle, hurrying through the ranks  
With glowing wheels, nor shunned the lifted spear ;  
Some fought with swords, while others urged their  
steeds

Again into the fray, encountering those  
Who had repelled them. But when Phorbas, leader  
Of the Athenian cavalry, observed  
The chariots of the foe in throngs advance,  
He and the chieftains of the Theban horse  
In the encounter mingled, and by turns  
Prevailed and were discomfited. I speak not  
From fame alone, but what myself beheld,  
For I was present where the chariots fought,  
And the brave chiefs who in those chariots rode.  
In an assemblage of so many horrors,  
I know not which to mention first ; how thick  
The clouds of dust which blackened all the sky  
Or those who, tangled in the stubborn reins,  
Were dragged at random o'er the field, and bathed  
In their own gore, their chariots overthrown  
Or broken ; others headlong from their seat  
Were violently dashed upon the ground,  
And breathed their last amid their splintered wheels.  
When Creon saw his cavalry prevail,  
Hastily snatching up a pointed spear,  
Onward he marched impetuous, lest his troops  
Should lose their courage ; nor through abject fear  
Did Theseus' bands recoil : without delay  
On to the combat, sheathed in glittering arms,  
The dauntless chief advanced, and now began  
In the main body of each adverse host  
A universal conflict ; with the slain  
The slayer mingled lay ; while clamorous shouts  
Were heard from those that to their comrades cried :

“Strike! With your spears oppose Eretheus’ race.”  
A legion sprung from the slain dragon’s teeth  
With courage fought, and pressed on our left wing  
So hard that it gave way, while by our right  
Discomfited the Theban squadrons fled.  
Thus in an equal balance long remained  
The fate of war, but here again our chief  
Deserved applause, for he not only gained  
All that advantage his victorious troops  
Could give him, but proceeded to that wing  
Which had been worsted: with so loud a shout  
That earth resounded, “Valiant youths,” he cried,  
“If ye repel not those protended spears  
Of the fierce dragon’s brood, Minerva’s city  
Is utterly destroyed.” These words infused  
New confidence in all th’ Athenian host.  
Then, snatching up the ponderous club he won  
Near Epidaurus, with his utmost force  
He swang that formidable weapon round,  
Severing, like tender poppies from the stalks,  
At the same stroke, their necks and helméd heads,  
Yet scarcely could he put to flight the troops  
Of Argos. With a shout, then vaulting high,  
I clapped my hands, while to the gates they ran.  
Through every street re-echoed mingled shrieks  
Of young and old, who by their fears impelled  
Crowded the temples. But when he with ease  
The fortress might have entered, Theseus checked  
The ardour of his host, and said he came  
Not to destroy the city, but redeem  
The bodies of those slaughtered chiefs. A man  
Like this should be selected for the leader  
Of armies, who amidst dangers perseveres  
Undaunted, and abhors the madding pride  
Of those who, flushed with triumph, while they seek  
To mount the giddy ladder’s topmost round,  
Forfeit that bliss they else might have enjoyed.

CHOR. Now I have seen this unexpected day,  
I deem that there are gods, and feel my woes

Alleviated since these audacious miscreants  
Have suffered their deserts.

ADR. Why do they speak  
Of wretched man as wise? On thee, O Jove,  
Our all depends, and whatsoe'er thou wilt  
We execute. The power of Argos seemed  
Too great to be resisted; we relied  
On our own numbers and superior might.  
Hence, when Eteocles began to treat  
Of peace, though he demanded moderate terms,  
Disdaining to accept it, we rushed headlong  
Into perdition: while the foolish race  
Of Cadmus, like some beggar who obtains  
Immense possessions suddenly, grew proud,  
And pride was the forerunner of their ruin.  
Mortals, devoid of sense, who strain too hard  
Your feeble bow, and after ye have suffered  
Unnumbered evils justly, to the voice  
Of friends still deaf, are guided by events;  
And cities, who by treaty might avert  
Impending mischief, choose to make the sword,  
Rather than reason, umpire of your strife.  
But whither do these vain reflections tend?  
What I now wish to learn is, by what means  
Thou didst escape: I into other matters  
Will then make full inquiry.

MES. While the tumult  
Of battle in the city still prevailed,  
I through that gate came forth by which the troops  
Had entered.

ADR. But did ye bear off the bodies  
Of those slain chiefs for whom the war arose?

MES. Who o'er seven noble houses did preside.

ADR. What's this thou saidst? But where are all the  
rest

Of the deceased, an undistinguished crowd?

MES. Lodged in a tomb amid Cithæron's vale.

ADR. Beyond or on this side the mount? And who  
Performed this mournful duty?





Fresh wreaths of laurel with augmented fame;  
 Doomed to behold the pale remains  
 Of my loved children, bitter, pleasing sight,  
 after grief shall feel an unforeseen delight.

## II.

O that old Time's paternal care  
 Had kept me from the nuptial yoke.  
 What need had I of sons? This grievous stroke  
 Could never then have been my share:  
 But now I see perpetual cause to mourn;  
 My children, from these arms for ever are ye torn.  
 But lo! the corpses of those breathless youths,  
 Are borne in pomp funereal. Would to Heaven  
 I with my sons might perish, and descend  
 The shades of Pluto!

ADR. Matrons, o'er the dead,  
 Fale tenants of the realms beneath, now vent  
 Your loudest groans, and to my groans reply.

CHOR. O children, whom in bitterness of soul,  
 With a maternal fondness, we accost;  
 To thee, my breathless son, to thee I speak.

ADR. Ah me! my woes!

CHOR. We have endured, alas!  
 Afflictions the most grievous.

ADR. O ye dames  
 Of my loved Argos, view ye not my fate?

CHOR. Me, miserable and childless they behold.

ADR. Bring to their hapless friend each bloody corse  
 Of those famed chiefs, dishonourably slain,  
 And by the hands of cowards: when they fell,  
 The battle ended.

CHOR. O let me embrace  
 My dearest sons, and in these arms sustain!

ADR. Thou from these hands receiv'st them: such a  
 weight

Of anguish is too grievous to be borne.

CHOR. By their fond mothers, you forget to add.  
 Wretch that I am!

ADR. Ah, listen to my voice.

CHOR. Both to yourself and us these plaints belong.

ADR. Would to the gods that the victorious troops  
Of Thebes had slain and laid me low in dust !

CHOR. O that in wedlock I had ne'er been joined  
To any lord !

ADR. Ye miserable mothers  
Of those brave youths, who for their country died,  
An ocean of calamity behold.

CHOR. We, hopeless mourners, with our nails have torn  
These bleeding visages, and on our heads  
Strewn ashes.

ADR. Ah ! ah me ! Thou opening ground  
Swallow me up. O scatter me, ye storms ;  
And may Jove's lightning on this head descend !

CHOR. You witnessed in an evil hour the nuptials  
Of your two daughters, in an evil hour  
Apollo's mystic oracles obeyed.

The wife whom you have taken to your arms  
Is that destructive fiend who left the house  
Of Ædipus, and chose with you to dwell.

THESEUS, ADRASTUS, CHORUS.

THE. The questions I designed to have proposed  
To you, ye noble matrons, when ye uttered  
Your loud complaints amidst th' assembled host,  
I will omit, and mean to search no farther  
Into the moving history of your woes.  
But now of thee, Adrastus, I inquire,  
Whence sprung these chiefs whose prowess did transcend  
That of all other mortals ? Thou art wise,  
And these transactions, which full well thou know'st,  
Canst to our youthful citizens unfold.  
For, of their bold achievements, which exceed  
The power of language to express, myself  
Have been a witness, when they strove to storm  
The Theban walls. But lest I should provoke  
Thy laughter, this one question will I spare ;  
With what brave champion in th' embattled field  
Each fought, and from the weapon of what foe  
Received the deadly wound : for these vain tales

But serve an equal folly to display  
In those who either hear them, or relate,  
Should he who mingles in the thickest fray,  
From either army, while unnumbered spears  
Before his eyes are thrown, distinctly strive  
To ascertain what dauntless warrior launched  
With surest aim the missile death. These questions  
I cannot ask, nor credit those who dare  
To make such rash assertions. For the man  
Who to his foes in combat stands opposed  
Can scarce discern enough to act the part  
Which his own duty calls for.

ADR.

Now attend,

For no unwelcome task have you imposed  
On me, of praising those departed friends,  
Of whom with truth and justice I would speak.  
Do you behold yon hero's graceful form,  
Through which the bolt of Jove hath forced its way?  
This youth is Capaneus, who, though the fortune  
Which he possessed was ample, ne'er grew vain  
Through wealth, nor of himself more highly deemed  
Than if he had been poor, but shunned the man  
Who proudly glories in a sumptuous board,  
And treats a frugal competence with scorn;  
For he maintained that life's chief good consists not  
In the voracious glutton's full repast,  
But that a moderate portion will suffice.  
In his attachments still was he sincere,  
And zealous for the good of those he loved,  
Whether at hand or absent still the same;  
Small is the number of such friends as these;  
His manners were not counterfeit, his lips  
Distilled sweet courtesy, and left not aught  
That he had promised, either to the slave,  
Or citizen of Argos, unperformed.  
Eteoclus I next proceed to name,  
For every virtuous practice much renowned,  
Small were the fortunes of this noble youth,  
But in the Argive region he enjoyed

Abundant honours : though his wealthier friends  
Oft sought to have presented him with gold,  
His doors were closed against that specious bane,  
Lest he might seem to act a servile part,  
By riches made a bondsman : he abhorred  
The guilt of individuals, not the land  
Which nourished them : to cities no reproach  
Is due because their rulers are corrupt.  
Such also was Hippomedon, the third  
Of these illustrious chiefs ; while yet a boy,  
To the delights the tuneful Muses yield,  
A life of abject softness, he disdained  
To turn aside : a tenant of the fields,  
His nature he to the severest toils  
Inuring, took delight in manly deeds,  
With fiery coursers issuing to the chase,  
Or twanged with nervous hands the sounding bow,  
And showed a generous eagerness to make  
His vigour useful to his native land.  
There lies the huntress Atalanta's son,  
Parthenopæus, by a beauteous form  
Distinguished : in Arcadia was he born,  
But, journeying thence to Inachus' stream,  
In Argos nurtured ; having there received  
His education, first, as is the duty  
Of strangers in the country where they dwell,  
He never made a foe, nor to the state  
Became obnoxious, waged no strife of words  
(Whence citizens and foreigners offend),  
But, stationed in the van of battle, fought  
To guard the land as if he had been born  
An Argive, and whene'er the city prospered  
Rejoiced, but was with deepest anguish stung  
If a reverse of fortune it endured :  
Though many lovers, many blooming nymphs  
To him their hearts devoted, he maintained  
A blameless conduct. The great praises due  
To Tydeus I concisely will express ;  
Though rude of speech, yet terrible in arms,

Devising various stratagems, surpassed  
 In prudence by his brother Meleager,  
 By warlike arts he gained an equal name,  
 Finding sweet music in the crash of shields :  
 Nature endued him with the strongest thirst  
 For glory and for riches ; but his soul  
 In actions, not in words, its force displayed.  
 From this account, O Theseus, wonder not  
 Such generous youths before the Theban towers  
 Feared not to meet an honourable death.  
 For education is the source whence springs  
 Ingenuous shame, and every man whose habits  
 Have erst been virtuous, not without a blush,  
 Becomes a dastard : courage may be taught ;  
 Just as a tender infant learns to speak  
 And listen to the words he comprehends not ;  
 But he such wholesome lessons treasures up  
 Till he is old. From this example train  
 Your progeny in honour's arduous paths.

CHOR. I educated thee, my hapless son,  
 Thee in this womb sustained, and childbirth pangs  
 For thee endured ; but now hath Pluto seized  
 The fruit of all my toils, and I, who bore  
 An offspring, am abandoned to distress,  
 Without a prop to stay my sinking age.

ADR. The gods themselves in louder strains extol  
 Oicleus' illustrious son, whom yet alive  
 They with his rapid coursers snatched away  
 And bore into the caverns of the earth.

THE. Nor shall I utter falsehood while my tongue  
 Recounts the praise of Polynices, son  
 Of (Edipus ; for as his guest the chief  
 Received me, ere, a voluntary exile,  
 Abandoning his native city reare  
 By Cadmus, to the Argive realm he went.  
 But know'st thou how I wish thou shouldst dispose  
 Of their remains ?

ADR. All that I know is this,  
 Whatever you direct shall be obeyed.

THE. As for that Capaneus, who by the name  
Launched from Jove's hand was smitten—

ADR. Would you burn  
His corse apart as sacred?

THE. Even so.  
But all the rest on one funereal pyre.

ADR. Where mean you to erect his separate tomb?

THE. I near these hapless youths have fixed the spot  
For his interment.

ADR. To your menial train  
Must this unwelcome office be consigned.

THE. But to those other warriors will I pay  
Due honours. Now advance, and hither bring  
Their corses.

ADR. To your children, wretched matrons,  
Draw near.

THE. Adrastus, sure thou hast proposed  
What cannot be expedient.

ADR. Why restrain  
The mothers from their breathless sons' embrace?

THE. Should they behold their children thus deformed,  
They would expire with grief. The face we loved,  
Soon as pale death invades its bloom, becomes  
A loathsome object. Why wouldst thou increase  
Their sorrows?

ADR. You convince me. Ye must wait  
With patience; for expedient are the counsels  
Which Theseus gives. But when we have consumed  
In blazing pyres their corses, ye their bones  
Must take away. Why forge the brazen spear,  
Unhappy mortals, why retaliate slaughter  
With slaughter? O desist; no more engrossed  
By fruitless labours, in your cities dwell,  
Peaceful yourselves, and through the nations round  
A general peace diffusing. For the term  
Of human life is short, and should be passed  
With every comfort, not in anxious toils.

[*Exeunt THESEUS and ADRASTUS.*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

No more a mother's happy name  
 Shall crown my fortunes or exalt my fame,  
 'Midst Argive matrons blest with generous heirs.  
 Of all the parent's hopes bereft,  
 By Dian, patroness of childbirth left,  
 Ordained to lead a life of cares,  
 To wandering solitude consigned,  
 I like a cloud am driven before the howling wind.

II.

We, seven unhappy dames, deplore  
 The seven brave sons we erst exulting bore,  
 Illustrious champions who for Argos bled :  
 Forlorn and childless, drenched in tears,  
 Downward I hasten to the vale of years,  
 But am not numbered with the dead  
 Or living : a peculiar state  
 Is mine, on me attends an unexampled fate.

III.

For me nought now remains except to weep :  
 In my son's house are left behind  
 Some tokens ; well I know those tresses shorn,  
 Which no wreath shall ever bind,  
 No auspicious songs adorn,  
 And golden-haired Apollo scorn ;  
 With horror from a broken sleep  
 Roused by grief at early morn  
 My crimson vest in gushing tears I steep.

But I the pyre of Capaneus behold  
 Already blazing, near his sacred tomb  
 Heaped high ; and placed without the fane, those gifts  
 Which Theseus' self appropriates to the dead :  
 Evadne too, the consort of that chief,  
 Who by the thunderbolts of Jove was slain ;



Daughter of noble Iphis, is at hand.  
 Why doth she stand upon the topmost ridge  
 Of yon ærial rock, which overlooks  
 This dome, as if she hither bent her way?

EVADNE, CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

EVA. What cheering beams of radiant light  
 Hyperion darted from his car,  
 And how did Cynthia's lamp shine bright,  
 While in the skies each glittering star  
 Rode swiftly through the drear abodes of night,  
 When Argive youths a festive throng  
 T' accompany the nuptial song  
 For Capaneus and me awaked the lyre?  
 Now frantic hither am I borne  
 Resolved to share my lord's funereal pyre,  
 With him to enter the same tomb,  
 End with him this life forlorn,  
 In Pluto's realms, the Stygian gloom.  
 If Heaven assent, the most delightful death  
 Is when with those we love we mix our parting breath.  
 CHOR. Near to its mouth you stand and overlook  
 The blazing pyre, Jove's treasure, there is lodged  
 Your husband whom his thunderbolts transpierced.

II.

EVA. Life's utmost goal I now behold,  
 For I have finished my career:  
 With steadfast purpose uncontrolled  
 My steps doth fortune hither steer.  
 In the pursuit of honest fame grown bold,  
 Am I determined from this steep  
 Into the flames beneath to leap,  
 And mine with my dear husband's ashes blend;  
 I to the couch of Proserpine,  
 With him in death united, will descend.  
 Thee in the grave I'll ne'er betray:

Life and wedlock I resign  
 May some happier spousal day  
 At Argos for Evadne's race remain,  
 And every wedded pair such constant loves maintain.

CHOR. But, lo, 'tis he ! I view your aged sire,  
 The venerable Iphis, who approaches  
 As a fresh witness of those strange designs  
 Which yet he knows not, and will grieve to hear.

IPHIS, CHORUS, EVADNE.

IPH. O most unhappy ! Hither am I come,  
 A miserable old man, with twofold griefs  
 By Heaven afflicted ; to his native land,  
 The body of Eteoclus, my son,  
 Slain by a Theban javelin, to convey,  
 And seek my daughter, with impetuous step  
 Who rushed from her apartment ; in the bond  
 Of wedlock she to Capaneus was joined,  
 And wishes to accompany in death  
 Her husband ; for a time she in my house  
 Was guarded, but since I no longer watched her,  
 'Midst the confusion of our present ills  
 She 'scaped ; but we have reason to suspect  
 That she is here ; inform us, if ye know.

EVA. Why do you question them ? Here on this rock  
 I, O my father, o'er the blazing pyre  
 Of Capaneus stand, hovering like a bird.

IPH. What gale hath borne thee hither ? Or what means  
 That robe, my daughter ? Wherefore, from thy home  
 Departing, to this region didst thou fly ?

EVA. 'Twould but exasperate you to be informed  
 Of my intentions : therefore, O my sire,  
 Am I unwilling you should hear.

IPH. What schemes  
 Are these which thy own father may not know ?

EVA. In you I should not find an equal judge  
 Of my intentions.

IPH. But on what account  
 Thy person with that habit hast thou graced ?

EVA. A splendid action, O my sire, the robe  
I wear denotes.

IPH. Ill-suited is a garb  
So costly to the matron who bewails  
Her husband's death.

EVA. For an unheard-of purpose  
In gay habiliments am I attired.

IPH. Why stand'st thou near the grave and blazing  
pyre?

EVA. Hither I come to gain a mighty conquest.

IPH. O'er whom wouldst thou prevail? I wish to know.

EVA. O'er every woman whom the sun beholds.

IPH. By Pallas in the labours of the loom  
Instructed, or with a judicious soul,  
That best of gifts endued?

EVA. With dauntless courage :  
For in the grave I with my breathless lord  
Shall be united.

IPH. What is it thou say'st?  
Or with what views a riddle thus absurd  
Hast thou propounded?

EVA. Hence into the pyre  
Of Capaneus will I leap down.

IPH. My daughter,  
Before the multitude forbear to hold  
This language.

EVA. There is nothing I have said  
But what I wish that every Argive knew.

IPH. Yet will I not consent thou shouldst fulfil  
Thy desperate purpose.

EVA *[as she is throwing herself from the Rock.]*

It is all the same :  
Nor can you now by stretching forth your hand  
Stop my career. Already have I taken  
The fatal leap, and hence descend, with joy  
Though not indeed to you, yet to myself,  
And to my lord, with whose remains I blaze.

CHOR. Thou hast committed an atrocious deed,  
O woman.

IPH.                                Wretched me ! I am undone,  
Ye dames of Argos.

CHOR.                            Horrid are these ills  
Which thou endur'st, the deed thine eyes behold  
Is the most daring.

IPH.                                No man can ye find  
Than me more miserable.

CHOR.                                O wretch ! A portion  
Of (Edipus' fortunes was reserved  
For thee in thy old age : thou too, my city,  
Art visited by the severest woes.

IPH. Why was this privilege, alas ! denied  
To mortals, twice to flourish in the bloom  
Of youth, and for a second time grow old ?  
For in our houses, we, if aught is found  
To have been ill contrived, amend the fault  
Which our maturer judgment hath descried ;  
While each important error in our life  
Admits of no reform : but if with youth  
And ripe old age we twice had been indulged,  
Each devious step that marked our first career  
We in our second might set right. For children,  
Seeing that others had them, much I wished,  
And pined away with vehement desire :  
But if I had already felt these pangs,  
And from my own experience learnt how great  
Is the calamity to a fond father  
To be bereft of all his hopeful race,  
I into such distress had never fallen  
As now o'erwhelms me, who begot a youth  
Distinguished by his courage, and of him  
Am now deprived. No more. But what remains  
For me—wretch that I am ? Shall I return  
To my own home, view many houses left  
Without inhabitants, and waste the dregs  
Of life in hopeless anguish, or repair  
To the abode of Capaneus, with joy  
By me frequented while my daughter lived ?  
But she is now no more, who loved to kiss

My furrowed cheeks and stroked this hoary head.  
 Nought can delight us more than the attention  
 Which to her aged sire a daughter pays :  
 Though our male progeny have souls endued  
 With courage far superior, yet less gently  
 Do they these soothing offices perform.  
 Will ye not quickly drag me to my home,  
 And in some dungeon's gloomy hold confine,  
 To wear away these aged limbs by famine?  
 Me, what, alas ! can it avail to touch  
 My daughter's bones ! What hatred do I bear  
 To thee, O irresistible old age !  
 Them, too, my soul abhors who vainly strive  
 To lengthen out our little span of life ;  
 By th' easy vehicle, the downy couch,  
 And by the boasted aid of magic song,  
 Labouring to turn aside from his career  
 Remorseless death : when they who have no longer  
 The strength required to serve their native land  
 Should vanish, and to younger men give place.

SEMICHOR. Lo, there the bones of my slain sons, whose  
 corpses

Already in funereal pyres have blazed,  
 Are borne along. Support a weak old woman :  
 The pangs which for my children's loss I feel  
 Deprive me of all strength. I long have mourned,  
 And am enervated by many griefs.  
 Can any curse severer be devised  
 For mortals than to see their children dead ?

BOY. O my unhappy mother, from the flames  
 I bear my father's relics, which my sorrows  
 Have made more weighty : this small urn contains  
 All my possessions.

SEMICHOR. Why dost thou convey  
 The sad and pleasing cause of many tears  
 To the afflicted mothers of the slain,  
 A little heap of ashes in the stead  
 Of those who in Mycenæ were renowned ?

BOY. But I, a wretched orphan, and bereft

Of my unhappy father, shall receive  
For my whole portion a deserted house,  
Torn from the tutelary arms of him  
To whom I owe my birth.

SEMICHOR.                               Where, where are those  
Whom sorrowing I brought forth, whom at my breast  
With a maternal tenderness I reared,  
'Their slumbers watched, and sweetest kisses gave?

BOY. Your children are departed, they exist  
No longer, O my mother ; they are gone  
For ever, by devouring flames consumed ;  
In the mid-air they float, borne on light wing  
To Pluto. O my sire, for sure thou hear'st  
Thy children's lamentations, shall I bear  
The shield hereafter to avenge thy death ?

IPH. May the time come, my son, when the just gods  
To me shall for thy valiant father's death  
A full atonement grant : that grievous loss  
In this torn heart yet rankles unappeased.

BOY. I our hard fortunes have enough bewailed,  
My sorrows are sufficient. I will take  
My stand where chosen Grecian chiefs, arrayed  
In brazen arms, with transport will receive me  
Th' avenger of my sire. E'en now these eyes  
Behold thee, O my father, on my cheeks  
A kiss imprinting, though the winds have borne  
Thy noble exhortations far away,  
But thou hast left two mourners here behind,  
Me and my mother: venerable man,  
No time can from thy wounded soul efface  
The grief thou for thy children feel'st.

IPH. The load  
Of anguish which I suffer is so great  
That it hath quite o'ercome me. Hither bring,  
And let me clasp those ashes to my breast.

BOY. These bitter lamentations have I heard  
With streaming tears ; they rend my inmost soul.

IPH. Thou, O my son, art lost; and I no more  
Thy mother's dear, dear image shall behold.

THESEUS, ADRASTUS, IPHIS, CHORUS.

THE. Behold ye, O Adrastus, and ye dames  
Of Argive race, these children, in their hands  
Bearing the relics of their valiant sires,  
By me redeemed? Athens and I, these gifts  
On you bestow: still are ye bound to cherish  
A memory of those benefits, obtained  
Through my victorious spear. To all I speak  
In the same terms. With honour due repay  
This city, and the kindness which from us  
Ye have experienced to your children's children  
Transmit through latest ages. But let Jove  
Bear witness, with what tokens of our bounty  
Ye from this realm depart.

ADR. Full well we know  
What favours you, O Theseus, have conferred  
Upon the Argive land, when most it needed  
A benefactor; hence will we retain  
Such gratitude as time shall ne'er efface.  
For we, the generous treatment which from you  
We have received, as largely should requite.

THE. Is there aught else I can bestow?

ADR. All hail;  
For you and Athens every bliss deserve.

THE. May Heaven this wish accomplish! and mayst  
thou,  
My friend, with equal happiness be crowned.

MINERVA, THESEUS, ADRASTUS, IPHIS, CHORUS.

MIN. Attend, O Theseus, to Minerva's words,  
And thou shalt learn what thou must do to serve  
This country; give not to the boys these bones  
To bear to Argos, on such easy terms  
Dismissing them. But to requite the toils  
Of thee and of thy city, first exact  
A solemn oath, and let Adrastus swear,  
For he, its king, for the whole Argive realm  
Is qualified to answer, and be this  
The form prescribed: "Ne'er will Mycene's sons

Into this land a hostile squadron lead,  
But hence, with their protended spears, repel  
Each fierce invader." If the sacred oath  
They impiously should violate, and march  
Against thy city, pray that utter ruin  
May light on Argos, and its perjured state.  
But where the gods require that thou shalt slay  
The victims, I will tell thee; in thy palace  
On brazen feet a massive tripod stands  
Which erst Alcides, when the walls of Troy  
He from their basis had o'erthrown, and rushed  
New labours to accomplish, gave command  
Close to the Pythian altar should be placed.  
When on this tripod thou hast slain three sheep,  
The destined victims, in its hollow rim  
Inscribe the oath; then to that god consign  
Who o'er the Delphic realm presides: such tablet  
To Greece shall testify the league ye form.  
But in the bowels of the earth conceal  
The knife with which the victims thou hast slain,  
For this, when shown, should they hereafter come,  
With armed bands, this city to assail,  
Will strike Mycene's warriors with dismay,  
And their return embitter. When these rites  
Thou hast performed, the ashes of the dead  
Send from this region, and to them assign  
That grove in which their corpses have by fire  
Been purified, the spot where meet three roads  
Sacred to th' Isthmian goddess. This to thee,  
O Theseus, have I spoken: to the boys  
Who spring from those slain Argive chiefs I add:  
Ismenos' city, soon as ye attain  
Maturer years, shall ye in ruin lay,  
Retaliating the slaughter of your sires;  
Thou too, Ægialeus, a youthful chief,  
Shalt in thy father's stead command the host,  
And marching from Ætolia's realm, the son  
Of Tydeus, Diomedes by name; the down  
No sooner shall o'erspread your blooming cheeks,



Than with a band of Argive warriors clad  
In glittering armour, with impetuous rage,  
Ye the seven Theban turrets shall assail ;  
Them, in your wrath, shall ye, in manhood's prime,  
Like whelps of lions visit, and lay waste  
The city. What have I foretold, ere long  
Will be accomplished. By applauding Greece  
Called the Epigoni, ye shall become.  
A theme for your descendants' choral songs,  
Such squadrons ye to battle shall lead forth  
Favoured by righteous Jove.

THE. Thy dread injunctions,  
Minerva, awful queen, will I obey :  
For I, while thou direct'st me, cannot err.  
I from Adrastus will exact that oath,  
Deign only thou to guide my steps aright,  
For to our city if thou prov'st a friend  
We shall enjoy blest safety.

CHOR.                                 Let us go,  
Adrastus, and eternal friendship swear  
To Theseus and his city, for the toils  
They have endured our grateful reverence claim.



# HIPPOLYTUS.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

VENUS.

HIPPOLYTUS.

ATTENDANTS OF HIPPOLYTUS.

OFFICER BELONGING TO THE  
PALACE.

CHORUS OF TRÆZENIAN DAMES.

NURSE.

PHÆDRA.

THESEUS.

MESSENGERS,  
DIANA.

SCENE—BEFORE PITTHEUS' PALACE AT TRÆZENE.

### VENUS.

My empire man confesses, and the name  
Of Venus echoes through heaven's wide expanse.  
Among all those who on the distant coast  
Of ocean dwell, and earth's remotest bounds  
Old Atlas' station who upholds the skies,  
Beholding the resplendent solar beams ;  
On them who to my power due homage pay  
Great honours I bestow, and to the dust  
Humble each proud contemner. E'en the race  
Of happy deities with pleasure view  
The reverence mortals yield them. Of these words  
Ere long will I display the truth : that son  
Of Theseus and the Amazonian dame,  
Hippolytus, by holy Pittheus taught,  
E'en he alone among all those who dwell  
Here in Træzene, of th' immortal powers  
Styles me the weakest, loathes the genial bed,  
Nor to the sacred nuptial yoke will bow :  
Apollo's sister, Dian, sprung from Jove,  
He worships, her the greatest he esteems  
Of all the gods, and ever in her groves

A favoured comrade of the virgin dwells,  
With his swift hounds the flying beasts of prey  
Expelling from their haunts, and aims at more  
Than human nature reaches. Him in this  
I envy not : why should I ? Yet shall vengeance  
This day o'ertake the miscreant : I have forged  
Each implement already, and there needs  
But little labour to effect his doom.  
For erst, on his arrival from the house  
Of Pittheus, in Pandion's land, to view  
The mystic rites, and in those mystic rites  
To be initiated, his father's wife,  
Illustrious Phædra, saw the prince, her heart  
At my behest love's dire contagion seized :  
And ere she came to this Troezenian coast,  
She, where Minerva's rock o'erlooks this land,  
To Venus reared a temple, for the youth  
Who in a foreign region dwelt, engrossed  
By amorous frenzy, and to future times  
Resolved this lasting monumental pile  
Of her unhappy passion to bequeath.  
But from Cecropia's realm since Theseus fled  
To expiate his pollution, with the blood  
Of Pallas' sons distained, and with his queen  
Sailed for this coast, to voluntary exile  
Submitting for one year, the wretched Phædra,  
Groaning and deeply smitten by the stings  
Of love, hath pined in silence, nor perceives  
One of her menial train whence this disease  
Invaded her. Yet of its full effect  
Must not her amorous malady thus fail :  
For I to Theseus am resolved to show  
The truth, no longer shall it rest concealed :  
Then will the father with his curses slay  
My youthful foe : for the reward on Theseus  
Conferred by Neptune, ruler of the waves,  
Was this : that thrice he to that god might sue  
For any gift, nor should he sue in vain.  
Phædra is noble, yet she too shall perish,

For I of such importance shall not hold  
 Her ruin as to spare those foes, on whom  
 I the severest vengeance will inflict,  
 That I may reassert my injured fame.  
 But hence must I retreat : for I behold  
 Hippolytus, this son of Theseus, comes,  
 Returning from the labours of the chase :  
 A numerous band of servants, on their prince  
 Attending, in the clamorous song unite  
 To celebrate Diana : for he knows not  
 That hell hath oped its gates, and he is doomed  
 After this day to view the sun no more. [Exit VENUS.

HIPPOLYTUS, ATTENDANTS.

HIP. Come on, my friends, attune your lays  
 To resound Diana's praise,  
 From the radiant fields of air  
 She listens to her votaries' prayer.

ATT. Awful queen enthroned above,  
 Hail thou progeny of Jove,  
 Virgin goddess, whom of yore  
 Latona to the Thunderer bore,  
 Thy matchless beauties far outshine  
 Each of those lovely maids divine,  
 Who fill with their harmonious choir  
 The domes of Heaven's immortal sire.  
 Hail, O thou whose charms excel  
 All nymphs that on Olympus dwell.

HIP. To deck thee, I this wreath, O goddess, bear,  
 Cropt from yon mead, o'er which no swain his flock  
 For pasture drives, nor hath the mower's steel  
 Despoiled its virgin herbage ; midst each flower,  
 Which spring profusely scatters, there the bee  
 Roams unmolested, and religious awe  
 Waters the champaign with abundant springs :  
 They who owe nought to learning, but have gained  
 From nature wisdom such as never fails  
 In their whole conduct, are by Heaven allowed  
 To cull these sweets, not so the wretch profane.

Vouchsafe, O dearest goddess, to receive  
 This braided fillet for thy golden hair,  
 From me a pious votary, who alone  
 Of all mankind am for thy worship meet,  
 For I with thee reside, with thee converse,  
 Hearing thy voice indeed, though I thy face  
 Have never seen. My life as it began  
 May I with spotless purity conclude !

OFFICER, HIPPOLYTUS.

OFF. My royal master (for the gods alone  
 Challenge the name of lord), will you receive  
 A servant's good advice ?

HIP. With joy ; else void  
 Of wisdom I to thee might justly seem.

OFF. Know you the law prescribed to man ?

HIP. The law !  
 I cannot guess the purport of thy question.

OFF. To loathe that pride which studies not to please.

HIP. Right : for what haughty man is not abhorred ?

OFF. Doth then an affable demeanour tend  
 To make us popular ?

HIP. This much avails,  
 And teaches us with ease to gain renown.

OFF. But think'st thou that among celestial powers  
 It bears an equal influence ?

HIP. Since the laws  
 By which we mortals act from Heaven derive  
 Their origin.

OFF. Why, then, an awful goddess  
 Neglect you to invoke ?

HIP. Whom ? Yet beware,  
 Lest thy tongue utter some imprudent word.

OFF. This Venus who is stationed o'er your gate.

HIP. Still chaste I at a distance her salute.

OFF. By mortals deemed illustrious she exacts  
 Your worship.

HIP. We select this god, that friend,  
 As suits our various tempers.

OFF. Were you wise,  
Wise as you ought, you might be truly happy.

HIP. I am not pleased with any god whose rites  
Demand nocturnal secrecy.

OFF. My son,  
We ought to reverence the immortal powers.

HIP. Entering the palace, O my friends, prepare  
The viands, after a fatiguing chase  
Delicious is the banquet : tend my steeds,  
That, when I have refreshed myself with food,  
Them I with more convenience to the car  
May yoke and exercise : but as for this  
Thy Cyprian queen, to her I bid adieu.

[*Exeunt HIPPOLYTUS and ATTENDANTS.*]

OFF. Meantime (for the example of young men  
Must not be imitated), prompt to think,  
And hold such language as a servant ought,  
Before thy image I devoutly bend,  
O sovereign Venus, thee doth it behove  
To pardon the rash boy who, flushed with pride,  
Speaks foolishly : seem thou as if his words  
Had never reached thine ear : for sure the gods  
In wisdom should transcend man's grovelling race.

[*Exit OFFICER.*]

# CHORUS.

## ODE.

### I. I.

A rock supplies, as we are told,  
In such abundance the exhaustless rill,  
That oft the virgins 'gainst its basis hold  
Their copious urns to fill.  
One of our associate train  
Thither, in the limpid wave,  
Went, her purple vests to lave,  
Then hung them dripping on a cliff, to drain  
And imbibe the sunny gale :  
I from her first caught this tale :

## I. 2.

That with sickness faint, alone,  
 In yonder palace on her sleepless bed  
 Our queen reclines, she a thin veil hath thrown  
     Over her beauteous head ;  
 This the third revolving day,  
 Since, o'erpowered by lingering pains,  
 She from all nourishment abstains,  
 Wasting that lovely frame with slow decay ;  
 She thus her hidden griefs would end,  
 Thus to the silent grave descend.

## II. 1.

From some god this impulse springs ;  
 Sure Pan-or Hecat  have fired thy brain,  
 Or awful Cybel  to vex thee brings  
     Her priests, a frantic train ;  
 Perhaps, exulting in the chase,  
 Thee Dictynna doth pursue,  
 For neglecting homage due  
 Her altar with the promised cates to grace,  
 She swiftly glides o'er mountain steep,  
 Fords the lake or billowy deep.

## II. 2.

Have another's witching charms  
 Seduced the monarch to a stol'n embrace ;  
 Doth then a harlot in thy Theseus' arms  
     The nuptial couch disgrace ?  
 Or from Cretan shores I ween  
 Some sailor crossed the billowy main,  
 Reached this hospitable plain,  
 And bore a doleful message to the queen :  
 Hence with deepest anguish pained  
 In her bed is she detained.

## III.

Some hidden grief with pregnant throes combined  
 Oft dwells upon the female mind,  
 Erst in my entrails raged this hidden smart :  
 Diana, that celestial maid,



Amid the pangs of childbirth went to aid,  
 I then invoked, and she, whose dart  
 Pierces the hind, with tutelary care  
 Descended at her votary's prayer,  
 And with her brought each friendly power  
 Who guards our sex in that distressful hour.

But lo! her aged nurse before the gates  
 Leads out the queen, over whose downcast brow  
 Care spreads a deeper cloud : my inmost soul  
 Burns with impatience to explore the grief  
 Which preys in secret on her fading charms.

## PHÆDRA, NURSE, CHORUS.

NUR. Ye wretched mortals, who by loathed disease  
 Are visited ! What shall I do to aid thee,  
 Or what shall I omit ? The solar beams  
 Here mayst thou view, here find a cooling air.  
 For we without the palace doors have borne  
 The couch where sickening thou reclin'st. Thy talk  
 Was all of coming hither : but in haste  
 Back to thy chamber soon wilt thou return :  
 For thou, each moment altering, tak'st delight  
 In nothing long ; the present quickly grows  
 Unpleasing, somewhat absent thou esteem'st  
 More grateful. Better were it to be sick  
 Than tend the lingering patient, for the first  
 Is but a simple ill, the last unites  
 The mind's more pungent griefs and manual toil.  
 But the whole life of man abounds with woe,  
 Our labours never cease. yet sure there is,  
 There is a blest futurity, concealed  
 Behind thick night's impenetrable veil.  
 We therefore seem mistaken, when we dote  
 On yonder sun, that o'er this nether earth  
 Displays its glittering beams, because we know  
 No other life, nor have the realms beneath  
 Been e'er laid open : but by tales, devised  
 To cheat, at random are we borne away.

PHÆ. Lift up my body, prop my sinking head,

Each limb, my friends, has lost its strength ; sustain,  
O ye who on your wretched mistress tend,  
My hands, which hang quite motionless : away  
With cumbrous ornaments, the caul remove,  
And let these tresses o'er my shoulders flow.

NUR. Daughter, be cheerful, and compose to rest  
Thy languid frame : thou, if with patience armed  
And generous fortitude of soul, wilt bear  
Thy sickness better. For mankind are doomed  
By fate to struggle with a load of ills.

PHÆ. How shall I drink at yonder limpid fount  
The cooling waters, and 'midst grassy vales  
Recline my wearied limbs beneath the shade  
Of spreading alders ?

NUR.                               What confused discourse  
Escapes thee ? Utter not before the crowd  
Such words as closely border on distraction.

PHÆ. Lead to yon mount ; I tread the piny grove,  
Where the staunch hounds along the mazy track  
Follow their prey, and, lightly bounding, seize  
The dappled stag. Ye gods, with my shrill voice  
What joy to rouse them, while my auburn hair  
Floats in the wanton gale, and brandish round  
In my firm hand Thessalia's pointed lance.

NUR. Whence, O my child, proceed these anxious cares ?  
What business with the chase hast thou ? Why thirst  
For the pure fountain, while a constant spring,  
Whose waters thou mayst drink, flows hard beside  
The citadel ?

PHÆ.               Dread Artemis, thou goddess  
Presiding o'er yon sacred lake, who aid'st  
The fleet-hoofed racer, bear me o'er thy fields  
To tame Hennesia's coursers.

NUR.                               Why repeat  
These incoherent words ? But now to climb  
The mountain's lofty summit was thy wish  
That thou might'st hunt, then on the sandy beach  
To drive thy steeds. O for an abler seer  
Who can expound what god with iron curb  
Subdues my daughter and perverts thy soul.

PHÆ. Ah, what have I been doing ? Wretched me !  
 From my right senses whither have I wandered ?  
 Into this frenzy I, alas ! am plunged  
 By some malignant demon. Yet once more  
 Cover my head. The words which I have spoken  
 Fill me with conscious shame, and many a tear  
 Streams down my cheeks ; I feel the rising blush,  
 And know not where to turn these eyes. The pang,  
 When reason reassumes her throne, is great.  
 Though madness be an evil : yet 'tis best  
 When in that state unconscious we expire.

NUR. Thee thus I cover : but ah, when will death  
 Cover my body ? A long life hath taught me  
 Full many a useful lesson. Friendships formed  
 With moderation for the human race  
 Are most expedient, and not such as pierce  
 The marrow of their souls : with the same ease  
 As they the sacred chords entwine they ought  
 To slacken them at will. But for one heart  
 To suffer twofold anguish, as I grieve  
 For my unhappy mistress, is a load  
 Beyond endurance. 'Tis remarked, there springs  
 From all sensations too intense, more pain  
 Than pleasure, and our health they oft impair.  
 A foe to all excess, I rather praise  
 This sentence, " Not too much of anything ; "  
 And in my judgment will the wise concur.

CHOR. Thou aged dame, who hast with steadfast zeal  
 Attended royal Phædra, we observe  
 What agonies she suffers, but discern not  
 The nature of her malady ; and wish  
 By thee to be instructed whence it springs.

NUR. I know not ; for no answer will she give  
 To my inquiries.

CHOR. Nor the source whence rise  
 Her sufferings ?

NUR. Your account and mine agree :  
 For she on all these points remains still dumb.

CHOR. How faint and wasted seems that graceful  
 form !

NUR. No wonder : since she tasted any food  
This day's the third.

CHOR. By Ate's wrath o'ercome,  
Or does she strive to die ?

NUR. To die she strives,  
And by such abstinence her life would end.

CHOR. Strange is thy tale : this cannot please her lord.

NUR. From him she hides her sickness, and pretends  
To be in health.

CHOR. If in her face he look,  
Can he not read it ?

NUR. To a foreign land  
From hence, alas ! he went, nor yet returns.

CHOR. Why art thou not more urgent to explore  
This malady, these wanderings of her soul ?

NUR. Without effect all methods have I tried :  
Yet with the self-same zeal will I persist,  
That ye may testify the strong attachment  
Which I to my unhappy queen have borne.  
O my loved daughter, let us both forget  
What we have said : be thou more mild, that gloom  
Which overcasts thy brow, those harsh resolves,  
Lay thou aside, and if to thee erewhile  
I spoke amiss, in milder accents now  
Will I express myself ; if under pains  
Thou labour, such as may not be revealed,  
To succour thee thy female friends are here.  
But if the other sex may know thy sufferings,  
Let the physician try his healing art.  
In either case, why silent ? It behoves thee,  
O daughter, to reply ; and, if I speak  
Unwittingly, reprove me, if aright,  
With wholesome admonition, O concur.  
Say somewhat : cast one look this way. Ah me !  
But listen to this truth, though more perverse  
Than ocean's waves : thy children, if thou die,  
Will be deserted, and can have no share  
In the paternal house : for his first queen,  
That martial Amazonian dame, hath borne

Their sire a son to lord it o'er thy race,  
 Though illegitimate, with liberal views  
 Trained up from infancy, him well thou know'st,  
 Hippolytus.

PHÆ. Ah me !

NUR. Doth then that name  
 Affect thee ?

PHÆ. You have ruined me ; peace, peace :  
 Be silent, I conjure you by the gods,  
 Speak of that man no more.

NUR. With open eyes,  
 And senses now restored, canst thou neglect  
 Thy children's interest, nor preserve thy life ?

PHÆ. I love my children : but another storm  
 Assails me.

NUR. O my daughter, sure thy hands  
 Are undefiled with blood ?

PHÆ. My hands are pure,  
 Yet doth pollution harbour in my soul.

NUR. Proceeds this mischief from some foe ?

PHÆ. A friend—  
 An unconsenting friend, alas !—destroys me,  
 Nor do I perish through my own consent.

NUR. Hath Theseus wronged thee ?

PHÆ. May I ne'er be found  
 To have injured him !

NUR. Then what important cause  
 Precipitates thy death ?

PHÆ. Indulge my error ;  
 For I 'gainst you offend not.

NUR. My assent  
 To such request would be a breach of duty.

PHÆ. What mean you by this violence ? Why hang  
 Upon my hand ?

NUR. In suppliant posture thus,  
 Thus to thy knees for ever will I cling.

PHÆ. If you, unhappy woman, heard my woes,  
 You would partake them.

NUR. What severer woe



PHO. The list of these  
 Have I experienced.  
 NYA. Daughter, ha, what wilt thou !  
 For whom dost burn'st thou with desecrated fires ?  
 PHO. Who is that son of an Antinous dame !  
 NYA. Mean'st thou Hippolytus !  
 PHO. By you, not me.  
 That name was poured.  
 NYA. Ah, what words are these !  
 How hast thou named me ! Thou, O my friends,  
 Is not to be endured ; I cannot live  
 To bear it ! In these eyes the lamp of day  
 Grows others, the circumference of the body  
 Will I cast off, not on such terms hold  
 A being I abhor. And now farewell  
 For ever ! Count me dead. Charge me no guilt  
 With some reluctance, yet so lawless love  
 At length they quell. Venus is then no goddess,  
 But somewhat more than goddess ; for my queen  
 And me, and this whole house, hath she destroyed.

## CHORUS.

## STEPHAN.

Too clear thou hast in the royal dame confess'd  
 The horrors which her bosom stuns :  
 O had I died ere this severe distress  
 Shock'd reason's seat and fired her front : brown !  
 Thy sorrows are by Heaven decreed.  
 Ye miseries on which mortals feed !  
 Thy shame lies open to the sun.  
 And thou, my royal mistress, art undone.  
 Short is thy date  
 What cruel fate  
 Such as with life alone can end,  
 Shall to the grave thy steps attend !  
 I see, I see through time's deep gloom,  
 These mansions fall by Venus' doom :  
 Such revolution is at hand,  
 Then, hapless Lorian, enough, she flies / demand.

PHÆ O ye Troezenian matrons, who reside  
 On this extremity of the domains  
 Where Pelops ruled ; through many a wakeful night  
 Have I considered whence mankind became  
 Thus universally corrupt, and deem  
 That to the nature of the human soul  
 Our frailties are not owing, for to form  
 Sound judgments is a privilege enjoyed  
 By many. But the matter in this light  
 Ought to be viewed ; well knowing what is good,  
 We practise not. Some do amiss through sloth,  
 Others to virtue's rigid laws prefer  
 Their pleasures ; for with various pleasures life  
 Is furnished ; conversation lengthened out  
 Beyond due bounds ; ease, that bewitching pest  
 And shame, of which there are two kinds—one leads  
 To virtue, by the other is a house  
 Involved in woe ; but if the proper season  
 For our expressing shame were ascertained  
 With due precision, things which bear one name  
 Could not have differed thus. When in my mind  
 I had revolved these thoughts, to me it seemed  
 As if no magic had sufficient power  
 To warp the steadfast purpose of my soul.  
 Here I to you the progress of my heart  
 Will next unfold, since love with his keen shafts  
 These wounds inflicted ; studious how to bear,  
 As it became me, this abhorred disease,  
 I from that time have by a wary silence  
 Concealed the pangs I suffer. For the tongue  
 Must not be trusted, well can it suggest  
 To others wholesome counsels when they err,  
 Though to its owner oft it proves the source  
 Of grievous ills. I next this amorous rage  
 With firmness was determined to endure,  
 And conquer it by chastity. At length,  
 When all these sage expedients proved too weak  
 O'er Venus to prevail, my best resource  
 I thought was death : none hath a right to blame

*melancholy*



These counsels. May my virtues be conspicuous ;  
But when I act amiss, I would avoid  
Too many witnesses. That on such deed,  
And e'en the inclination to transgress,  
Disgrace attends, I knew, and was aware  
That if from honour's paths a woman swerve  
She to the world is odious. On her head  
Be tenfold ruin heaped who first presumed  
To introduce adulterers, and defile  
The nuptial couch ; from those of nobler birth  
Begun this evil through our sex to spread.  
For when foul deeds please those who erst have borne  
A virtuous character, to souls depraved  
They recommend themselves beneath a form  
Of seeming excellence. Those too I hate  
Whose words are modest, but their lives impure  
In private. O thou goddess, who didst rise  
From ocean, lovely Venus, how can these  
Without a blush their injured lords behold ?  
Tremble they not, lest their accomplice darkness,  
Or lest the vaulted roofs of their abodes,  
Should send forth an indignant voice ? This robs  
Your queen of life, my friends : so shall the charge  
Of having shamed my lord, my children shamed,  
Be never urged against me : free and blest  
With liberty of speech, in the famed city  
Of Athens, they shall dwell, maternal fame  
Transmitted for their portion. E'en the man  
Of dauntless courage dwindles to a slave  
If conscious that his mother or his sire  
Have acted wickedly. One only good,  
A just and virtuous soul, the wise affirm,  
Strives for pre-eminence with life : for time,  
At length, when like some blooming nymph her charms  
Contemplating, he to our eyes holds up  
His mirror, every guilty wretch displays.  
Among that number may I ne'er be found !

CHOR. Wherever we discern it, O how fair  
Is modesty, that source of bright renown !

NUR. O queen, at first, an instantaneous shock,  
I, from the history of thy woes, received :  
Now am I sensible my fears were groundless.  
But frequently the second thoughts of man  
Are more discreet ; for there is nothing strange,  
Nought, in thy sufferings, foreign to the course  
Of nature : thee the goddess in her rage  
Invades. Thou lov'st. And why should this surprise ?  
Many as well as thee have done the same.  
Art thou resolved to cast thy life away  
Because thou lov'st ? How wretched were the state  
Of those who love, and shall hereafter love,  
If death must thence ensue ! For though too strong  
To be withstood, when she with all her might  
Assails us, Venus gently visits those  
Who yield ; but if she light on one who soars  
With proud and overweening views too high,  
As thou mayst well conceive, to utter scorn  
Such she exposes ; through the boundless tracts  
Of air she glides, and reigns 'midst ocean's waves :  
All things from her their origin derive,  
'Tis she that in each breast the genial seeds  
Of potent love infuses, and from love  
Descends each tribe that fills the peopled earth.  
They who with ancient writings have conversed,  
And ever dwell among the tuneful Nine,  
Know how to Theban Semele's embrace  
Flew amorous Jove, how bright Aurora stole  
Young Cephalus, and placed among the gods  
The object of her passion : yet in Heaven  
They still reside, where unabashed they meet  
Their kindred gods ; those gods, because they feel  
A sympathetic wound, I deem, indulge  
Their weakness : and wilt thou refuse to bear  
Like imperfections ? Nature on these terms  
Decreed thou from thy father shouldst receive  
Thy being : look for other gods, or yield  
Submission to these laws. Hast thou observed,  
How many husbands, men who are endued

With a superior wisdom, when they see  
 The nuptial bed by secret lust defiled,  
 Appear as though they saw not : and how oft  
 The fathers, if their sons transgress, connive  
 At their unhappy passion ? To conceal  
 Unseemly actions is no trifling part  
 Of human wisdom ; nor should man his life  
 Form with too great precision ; for the roof,  
 The covering from the storm, the builder leaves  
 Less fair, less highly finished. If immersed  
 In evils great as those thou hast described,  
 How canst thou hope to 'scape ? But if thy virtues,  
 Since thou art only human, far exceed  
 Thy failings, it is well with thee : desist,  
 O my loved daughter, from thy evil purpose,  
 And cease to utter these reproachful words :  
 For there is nought but contumelious pride  
 In thy endeavour to be yet more perfect  
 Than the immortal gods : endure thy passion  
 With fortitude, since 'twas the will divine  
 That thou shouldst love : but give a prosperous turn,  
 If possible, to thy disease. For songs  
 There are with magic virtues fraught, and words  
 Which soothe the soul : hence an effectual cure  
 May be obtained : in such discovery man  
 Would long in vain be busied, to our sex  
 If no spontaneous stratagem occur.

CHOR. Though her advice, amid thy present woes,  
 O Phædra, be more useful, I applaud  
 Thy better purpose : yet applause unsought  
 May haply give offence, and to thine ear  
 Convey sounds harsher than her specious words.

PHÆ. 'Tis this, e'en this, too plausible a tongue,  
 Which states administered by wholesome laws,  
 And houses of the mighty, hath o'erthrown :  
 Nor should we utter what delights the ear,  
 But for renown a generous thirst instil.

NUR. What means this grave harangue ? No need  
 hast thou



Thou lov'st, must either take a sign, a word,  
Or fragment of his robe, to join two hearts  
In mutual love.

PHÆ. But is this wondrous medicine  
You recommend an ointment or a potion?

NUR. I cannot tell. Search for a cure, my child,  
And not instruction.

PHÆ. Greatly do I fear  
Your wisdom will be carried to excess.

NUR. Know then thou art disposed to be alarmed  
At everything. But whence arise these terrors?

PHÆ. Aught that hath passed, lest you to Theseus' son  
Should mention.

NUR. Peace, O daughter, be it mine  
To manage this aright : I only sue,  
Benignant goddess, sprung from ocean's waves,  
That thou, O Venus, wouldst my projects aid.  
But to our friends within, will it suffice  
The rest of my intentions to unfold.

[Exit NURSE.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

O love, whose sweet delusions fly,  
Instilling passion through the eye,  
And steal upon the heart,  
Never thus my soul engage,  
Come not with immoderate rage,  
Nor choose thy keenest dart :  
Not the lightning's awful glare,  
Not the thunderbolts of Jove,  
Such destructive terrors bear,  
As strongly vibrate in the shafts of love.

I. 2.

On Alpheus' banks in vain, in vain,  
Or at Apollo's Delphic fane,  
Whole herds of slaughtered kine  
Doth Greece present, if we neglect

Venus' son, who claims respect,  
 The genial couch his shrine :  
 With the vengeance of a foe,  
 If the deity invades,  
 On man he pours forth every woe,  
 And crowds with victims all the Stygian shades.

## II. 1.

By Venus was Æchalia's maid,  
 Of hymeneal bonds afraid,  
 Consigned in days of yore,  
 Like a wild filly to the yoke,  
 Espoused 'midst horrid slaughter, smoke,  
 And rites profaned with gore ;  
 Indignant was the virgin led,  
 Streaming with dishevelled hair,  
 To the stern Alcides' bed,  
 While bridal shouts were mingled with despair.

## II. 2.

Unite, thou sacred Theban wall,  
 And fountain famed from Dirce's fall,  
 To witness with what might  
 Resistless Cytherea came,  
 Brandishing ethereal flame ;  
 To everlasting night,  
 She, beauteous Semele consigned,  
 Who to Jove Lyæus bore :  
 Her breath's a pestilential wind,  
 Our heads she like the bee still hovers o'er.

PHÆ. Restrain your tongues : we, O my friends, are  
 ruined.

CHOR. O Phædra, say what terrible event  
 In thy abode hath happened ?

PHÆ. Not a word  
 Must now be uttered : I would hear these sounds  
 Which issue from the palace.

CHOR. We are silent :  
 Yet must this prelude sure denote some ill.

PHÆ. Wretch that I am ! How dreadful are my woes !

CHOR. What shrieks, alas ! are these—what clamorous sounds

By thee now uttered ? Speak, my hapless queen,  
What sudden rumour terrifies thy soul ?

PHÆ. We are undone, but stand ye at these doors  
And listen to the uproar raised within.

CHOR. Thou to those portals art already close,  
And in the voice which issues from the palace  
Hast a great interest, therefore say what ill  
Hath happened.

PHÆ. Stern Hippolytus, the son  
Of that intrepid Amazonian dame,  
In loudest tone full many a horrid curse  
Is uttering 'gainst my servant.

CHOR. A mere noise  
Is all I hear, yet cannot I collect  
A single word distinctly : passing through  
These doors their sound hath surely reached thine ear.

PHÆ. He plainly calls her harbinger of vice,  
And the betrayer of her sovereign's bed.

CHOR. Wretch that I am ! Thou, O my dearest queen,  
Hast been betrayed. What counsel can I give ?  
The mystery is laid open ; thou art ruined—  
Utterly ruined.

PHÆ. Ah !

CHOR. Thy friends have proved  
Unfaithful to their trust.

PHÆ. To her I owe  
My ruin, who, though prompted by her love,  
Unwisely my calamity disclosed,  
Hoping the desperate malady to heal.

CHOR. What part, alas ! remains for thee to act,  
Surrounded by inevitable mischiefs ?

PHÆ. But one expedient for my present ills  
I know ; their only cure is instant death.

HIPPOLYTUS, NURSE, PHÆDRA, CHORUS

HIP. Earth, mother of us all, and sun, whose beams

Diffuse their splendour wide, what words, unfit  
For any tongue to utter, reached these ears !

NUR. Peace, O my son, lest some one hear thy voice.

HIP. I cannot bury such atrocious crimes  
As these in silence.

NUR. By that fair right hand,  
Thee I implore.

HIP. Profane not by your touch  
My garment.

NUR. Grovelling at thy knees, I crave  
Thou wouldst not ruin me.

HIP. Why wish to check  
My tongue, if you, as you pretend, have said  
Nought that is blamable ?

NUR. Yet must my words  
On no account be published

HIP. To the world  
What's virtuous may with honour be revealed.

NUR. Forget not thus the reverence, O my son,  
Due to a solemn oath.

HIP. Although my tongue  
Hath sworn, my soul is from the compact free.

NUR. O thou rash youth, what mean'st thou ? Art thou  
bent

On the destruction of thy friends ?

HIP. I hold  
The friendships of the wicked in abhorrence.

NUR. Forgive me : error is the lot of man.

HIP. By a fair semblance to deceive the world,  
Wherefore, O Jove, beneath the solar beams  
That evil, woman, didst thou cause to dwell ?  
For if it was thy will the human race  
Should multiply, this ought not by such means  
To be effected : better in thy fane  
Each votary, on presenting brass or steel,  
Or massive ingots of resplendent gold,  
Proportioned to his offering, might from thee  
Obtain a race of sons, and under roofs  
Which genuine freedom visits, unannoyed



By women, live. But to receive this worst  
Of evils, now no sooner are our doors  
Thrown open than the riches of our house  
We utterly exhaust. How great a pest  
Is woman this one circumstance displays ;  
The very father who begot and nurtured,  
A plenteous dower advancing, sends her forth,  
That of such loathed incumbrance he may rid  
His mansions : but the hapless youth, who takes  
This noxious inmate to his bed, exults  
While he caparisons a worthless image,  
In gorgeous ornaments and tissued vests  
Squandering his substance. With some noble race  
He who by wedlock a connection forms  
Is bound by hard necessity to keep  
The loathsome consort ; if perchance he gain  
One who is virtuous sprung from worthless sires,  
He by the good compensates for the ills  
Attending such a union. Happier he,  
Unvexed by these embarrassments, whose bride  
Inactive through simplicity, and mild,  
To his abode is like a statue fixed.  
All female wisdom doth my soul abhor.  
Never may the aspiring dame, who grasps  
At knowing more than to her sex belongs,  
Enter my house : for in the subtle breast  
Are deeper stratagems by Venus sown :  
But she whose reason is too weak to frame  
A plot, from amorous frailties lives secure.  
No female servant ever should attend  
The married dame, she rather ought to dwell  
Among wild beasts, who are by nature mute,  
Lest she should speak to any, or receive  
Their answers. But the wicked now devise  
Mischief in secret chambers, while abroad  
Their confidants promote it : thus, vile wretch,  
In privacy you came, with me to form  
An impious treaty for surrendering up  
My royal father's unpolluted bed.

Soon from such horrors in the limpid spring  
 My ears will I make pure : how could I rush  
 Into the crime itself, when, having heard  
 Only the name made mention of, I feel  
 As though I some defilement thence had caught ?  
 Base woman, know 'tis my religion saves  
 Your forfeit life, for by a solemn oath  
 If to the gods I had not unawares  
 Engaged myself, I ne'er would have refrained  
 From stating these transactions to my sire ;  
 But now, while Theseus in a foreign land  
 Continues, hence will I depart, and keep  
 The strictest silence. But I soon shall see,  
 When with my injured father I return,  
 How you and your perfidious queen will dare  
 To meet his eyes, then fully shall I know  
 Your impudence, of which I now have made  
 This first essay. Perdition seize you both :  
 For with unsatiated abhorrence, still  
 'Gainst woman will I speak, though some object  
 To my repeating always the same charge :  
 For they are ever uniformly wicked :  
 Let any one then prove the female sex  
 Possest of chastity, or suffer me,  
 As heretofore, against them to inveigh.

[*Exit* HIPPOLYTUS.]

CHORUS.

ANTISTROPHE.

O wretched woman's inauspicious fate !

What arts, what projects can we find,  
 To extricate ourselves, ere yet too late,  
 From our distress, or how the snare unbind ?

PHÆ. Just are the sufferings I endure :

Thou earth and sun, my anguish cure.

How, O my friends, shall I avoid

The stroke of fate before I am destroyed ?

Or how conceal

The pangs I feel ?

What tutelary god is near,  
 What friendly mortal will appear  
 To aid me in this hour of shame?  
 Afflictions and an evil name  
 The remnant of my life must vex :

I now am the most wretched of my sex.

CHOR. Alas ! all now is over ; O my queen,  
 The stratagems thy hapless servant framed  
 Fail of success, and desperate are thy fortunes.

PHÆ. O villanous destroyer of your friends,  
 How have you ruined me ! May Jove my grandsire  
 Uproot you in his vengeance from the earth,  
 And smite with thunderbolts that perjured head.  
 When I your baleful stratagems foresaw,  
 How oft did I enjoin you to conceal  
 That fatal truth, from whose discovery spring  
 The torments I endure : but you the secret  
 Contained not, hence with an unspotted fame  
 I cannot die, but some fresh scheme must forge.  
 For this rash youth, his soul with anger fired,  
 Will to his father my offence relate,  
 Inform the aged Pittheus of my woes,  
 And with this history, to my foul reproach,  
 Fill the whole world. May just perdition seize  
 Both you and all who by dishonest means  
 Their unconsenting friends are prompt to aid.

NUR. Thou, O my royal mistress, mayst condemn  
 The fault I have committed : for thy griefs  
 Are so severe that they awhile o'ercome  
 Thy better judgment. But wouldst thou admit  
 My answer, I could make one ; thee I nurtured,  
 And in thy happiness an interest feel.  
 But searching for a medicine to remove  
 Thy sickness, what I least could wish I found.  
 Success had stamped me wise : for by events  
 Are our opinions influenced.

PHÆ. Is it just,  
 And satisfactory, thus first to wound,  
 And then dispute with me ?



## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

To where yon rock o'erhangs the main  
 Waft me, ye gods, thence bid me spring,  
 Transformed into a bird, on vigorous wing  
 Through trackless ether mid the feathered train :  
 With rapid pinions would I soar  
 On high above the Adriatic shore,  
     And Po's impetuous stream,  
     Fixed on whose banks that virgin choir,  
     Who spring from an immortal sire,  
     Intent on the same dolorous theme,  
 Still weep for Phaeton's untimely end,  
 While 'midst the purple tide their amber tears descend.

## II. 2.

On to those coasts would I proceed  
 Where the Hesperides their song  
 Attune ; no mariner can thence prolong  
 The voyage, for, his daring bark t' impede,  
     Neptune those hallowed bounds maintains,  
 Where Atlas with unwearied toil sustains  
     The heavens' incumbent load ;  
 And from a never-failing spring  
 Ambrosia's streams their tribute bring,  
 Watering those chambers, Jove's abode :  
 There the glad soil its choicest gifts supplies  
 Obedient to the reign of happy deities.

## II. 1.

Across yon hoarse resounding main,  
 O bark of Crete, those hastier gales,  
 Which caught the snowy canvas of thy sails,  
 Conveyed my mistress, but conveyed in vain ;  
     By fate from prosperous mansions torn,  
 To nuptial rites unhallowed was she borne,  
     And scenes of future shame :  
 For surely from her native land,

To the renowned Athenian strand,  
 She with a luckless omen came ;  
 Though, to the shore their twisted cables bound,  
 With joy the sailors leaped on fair Munychia's ground.

## II. 2.

Her strength in lingering sickness spent,  
 Hence is she ordained to prove  
 How great the tortures of unlawful love,  
 By the command of angry Venus sent,  
 And after struggling long in vain,  
 Defeated by intolerable pain,  
 Her snowy neck around,  
 To bind that galling noose, resolves,  
 Which from her bridal roofs devolves,  
 Awed by the heaven-inflicted wound :  
 Choosing to perish thus with glory blest,  
 She, cruel love expels, the soul's tyrannic pest.

## MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MES. Ho ! ho ! All ye who near the palace stand,  
 With speed come hither ; by the fatal cord,  
 Our queen, the wife of Theseus, is destroyed.

CHOR. The deed, alas ! is done. My royal mistress  
 Suspended in the noose is now no more.

MES. Why are ye not more swift ? Will no one bring  
 The sharpened steel, that, with its aid, this instant  
 The bandage we may sever from her neck ?

1st SEMICHOR. What shall we do ? Were it not best, my  
 friends,  
 To rush into the palace, and our queen  
 Loose from the knot which her own hands have tied ?

2nd SEMICHOR. But why do the young servants, in this hour  
 Of woe, absent themselves ? To be too busy  
 Is never safe.

MES. Extend the hapless body ;  
 Unwelcome office to the lords I serve. [*Exit* MESSENGER.]

CHOR. From what I hear, this miserable dame  
 Hath left the world : for they are stretching forth  
 Her corse as one who is already dead.

## THESEUS, CHORUS.

THE. O woman, know ye what loud voice is that  
 Within the palace? From the menial train  
 Of damsels, shrieks most grievous reached my ear.  
 None of my household, opening wide the gates,  
 Deign to receive me with auspicious words  
 On my return from the prophetic shrine.  
 Hath aught befall'n the venerable Pittheus?  
 What though he be already far advanced  
 Into the vale of years, yet would his death  
 These mansions with a general sorrow fill.

CHOR. Fate in its march, O Theseus, hath not pierced  
 The aged : they who in the bloom of youth  
 Are now cut off your sorrows will demand.

THE. Ah me ! Hath cruel death then torn away  
 One of my sons ?

CHOR. They live, while breathless lies  
 Their mother ; and most piteous was her end.

THE. What saidst thou ? Is my dearest Phædra dead ?  
 Through what mischance ?

CHOR. She tied the fatal noose.

THE. Had grief congealed her blood ? Or was she  
 urged  
 To this by some calamitous event ?

CHOR. We only know the fact : for to the palace  
 Am I just come, O Theseus, that with yours  
 My sorrows I may mingle.

THE. Round these brows  
 Why do I wear a garland, but to show  
 That I the oracle in luckless hour  
 Have visited ? Unbar those doors, my servants,  
 Open them wide, that I the wretched corse  
 Of my dear wife may view, who by her death  
 Hath ruined me.

[*The palace doors are opened, and the body of PHÆDRA  
 is discovered, with a veil thrown over it.*]

CHOR. Thy woes, unhappy queen,  
 Were dreadful : yet thou such a deed hast wrought

As in confusion this whole house will plunge :  
 Presumptuous, violent, unnatural death  
 By thine own hand inflicted : for, ah ! who—  
 Who but thyself was author of thy fall ?

THE. Wretch that I am ! How many and how  
 great

Are my afflictions ? But of all the ills  
 Which I have felt, this last is most severe.  
 Me and these mansions with what terrors armed,  
 O fortune, dost thou visit ! From some fiend  
 This unforeseen dishonour takes its rise.  
 A life like mine is not to be endured,  
 And worse than death itself : for I so vast  
 An ocean of calamity behold,  
 That I can never hope to swim to land,  
 Or stem these overwhelming waves of woe.  
 Thee how shall I accost, or in what terms  
 Sufficiently deplore thy wretched fate ?  
 Swift as a bird 'scaped from the fowler's hand  
 Hence hast thou vanished with impetuous flight,  
 To the domains of sullen Pluto borne.  
 Grievous, alas ! most grievous are these woes.  
 But from some ancient stores of wrath, reserved  
 By vengeful Heaven to punish the misdeeds  
 Of a progenitor, I sure derive  
 This great calamity.

CHOR. Not you alone  
 Have such afflictions visited, O king ;  
 You but in common with a thousand mourners  
 Have lost the noble partner of your bed.

THE. Under earth's deepest caverns would I dwell,  
 Amid the shades of everlasting night,  
 A wretch best numbered with the silent dead,  
 Now I, alas ! for ever am bereft  
 Of thy loved converse ; for thou hast destroyed  
 Me rather than thyself. Who will inform me  
 Whence death, with ruthless destiny combined,  
 Thy vitals reached ? Can any one disclose  
 The real fact ; or doth this palace harbour  
 A menial swarm in vain ? For thee, for thee,



Alas, I grieve ! What sorrows of my house,  
Too great to be supported or expressed,  
Are these which I have witnessed ! But I perish ;  
These mansions are a desert, and my sons  
Have lost their mother.

CHOR.                   Thou hast left, hast left  
Thy friends, thou dearest and thou best of women,  
Whom the resplendent sun or glimmering moon  
E'er visited in her nocturnal round.  
O my unhappy, my unhappy queen !  
This house what dreadful evils have befallen !  
Thy fate bedews these swimming eyes with tears ;  
But, shuddering, to the sequel of our woes  
Already I look forward.

THE.                   Ha ! what means  
The letter which she clasps in her dear hand,  
What fresh intelligence can it contain ?  
Hath the deceased here written a request  
For aught that to the marriage bed pertains,  
And her sons' welfare ? Thou pale shade, rely  
On this assurance, that no other dame  
The widowed couch of Theseus shall ascend,  
Or enter these abodes. Yet with such force  
These well-known characters the golden ring  
Of her who is no more hath here impressed  
Allure me, that the seal I will burst open,  
And learn what charge to me she would convey.

CHOR. Some god, alas ! hath in succession heaped  
Evil on evil : such my fate, that life  
Will be no longer any life to me  
After this deed of horror. I pronounce  
The house of my devoted kings o'erthrown,  
And now no more a house. Yet, O ye gods,  
This family, if possible forbear  
To crush, and listen to my fervent vow.  
Yet, like the soothsayer, my foreboding soul  
An evil omen views.

THE.                   To my past woes,  
What woes, alas ! are added, far too great  
To be endured or uttered ! Wretched me !

CHOR. What fresh event is this? Speak, if the secret  
To ~~me~~ you can disclose.

THE. With loudest voice,  
The letter echoes such atrocious crimes  
As are not to be borne. To 'scape this load  
Of misery, whither, whither shall I fly?  
For I, alas! am utterly undone.  
What strains of horror have these wretched eyes  
Beheld, in that portentous scroll expressed!

CHOR. All that is terrible your words announce.

THE. Within the door of my indignant lips  
No longer thus will I contain a deed  
Of unexampled guilt. O city, city!  
Hippolytus with brutal force hath dared  
To violate my bed, and set at nought  
Jove's awful eye. O Neptune, O my sire,  
Since thou hast firmly promised that thou thrice  
Wouldst grant me what I prayed for; now fulfil  
One vow, and slay my son, nor let him 'scape  
This single day, if thou with me design  
To ratify the compact thou hast made.

CHOR. Recall that imprecation to the gods:  
For you, O king, your error will perceive;  
Attend to my advice.

THE. These ears are closed:  
Moreover I will drive him from the land;  
For of these twofold fates, or this or that  
Must smite him; Neptune, when he hears my curses,  
Will plunge the miscreant to the shades of hell;  
Else, cast forth from this region, and ordained  
To wander in some foreign land, a life  
Of the profoundest misery shall he drag.

CHOR. Behold how seasonably your son himself,  
Hippolytus, is coming: O subdue,  
My royal lord, subdue that baleful rage;  
Consult the good of your unhappy house.

HIPPOLYTUS, THESEUS, CHORUS.

HIP. Hearing your voice, I with the utmost speed  
Am hither come, O father; though whence rise

These groans I know not, and from you would learn.  
Ha! what is here? Your consort, O my sire,  
I see, a breathless corse: this needs must cause  
The greatest wonder. Since I left her living  
How short the intervening space! But now  
She oped those eyes to view the radiant sun.  
What dire mischance befell her, in what manner  
She died, inform me. Are you silent still?  
In our calamities of no avail  
Is silence: for solicitous to know  
All that hath passed, with greediness the heart  
Explores a tale of woe; nor is it just,  
My father, your afflictions to conceal  
From friends, and those who are yet more than  
friends.

THE. O mortals, why, unprofitably lost  
In many errors, strive ye to attain  
A thousand specious arts, some new device  
Still meditating, yet ye neither know  
One rare attainment, nor by your inquiries  
Could ever reach the gift of teaching those  
Who lack discretion how to think aright?

HIP. The sage you speak of, he who could compel  
Fools to grow wise, must be expert indeed.  
But since the subtle arguments you use  
Are so ill-timed, my sire, I greatly fear  
Your woes should cause your tongue to go beyond  
The bounds of reason.

THE. With some clearer test  
Man ought to have been furnished, to discern  
The thoughts and sever from the real friend  
Each vile impostor. All the human race  
Should have two voices—one of sacred truth,  
No matter what the other: 'gainst each plot  
Devised by foul injustice, hence the first  
Might in perpetual evidence come forth,  
And none could be deceived.

HIP. Hath any friend  
Accused me in your ear, and fixed reproach  
Upon the guiltless? I with dire amaze

Am smitten : in such incoherent words  
Your rage bursts forth that horror fills my soul.

THE. Ah, whither will the mind of man proceed  
In its career? Can nature fix no bounds  
To impudence? For if this evil take  
Still deeper root through each succeeding age,  
The son grown more abandoned than the father,  
In pity to this world the gods should add  
Another world sufficient to contain  
All those who swerve from justice and the brood  
Of sinners. Look upon that impious wretch,  
Though sprung from my own loins, who hath defiled  
My nuptial couch; too clearly the deceased  
His most atrocious villany hath proved.  
Show then thy face before thy injured sire,  
Since to this pitch of unexampled guilt  
Thou hast proceeded. Yet art thou the man  
Who holds familiar converse with the gods  
As though his life were perfect? Art thou chaste  
And pure from all defilement? By thy boasts  
I will not be deluded, nor suspect  
Thou canst impose upon the powers divine.  
Now glory in thy vegetable food,  
Disciple of the tuneful Orpheus, rave  
With Bacchus' frantic choir, and let the fumes  
Of varied learning soothe thee. Thou art caught.  
From me let all take warning, and avoid  
Those artful hypocrites who bait the snare  
With words denoting great austerity,  
While they contrive base projects. She is dead,  
And so thou deem'st thyself secure; yet hence  
Thy guilt, O miscreant, is more clearly proved.  
What weightier oath, what plea canst thou devise  
This letter to confute, that thou mayst 'scape  
Unpunished for thy crime? Wilt thou allege  
She hated thee, and that thy spurious birth  
Makes the legitimate thy foes? 'Twill argue  
That she was prodigal of life, if thus  
She forfeited whate'er her soul held dear

Through enmity to thee. But man belike  
 Is privileged from lust, whose power innate  
 Misleads frail woman. Well am I aware  
 Both male and female are alike exposed  
 To danger, oft as Cytherea fires  
 The youthful heart, although a partial world  
 Forbear to brand our sex with equal shame.  
 But wherefore in an idle strife of words  
 With thee should I engage, when here, the corse,  
 That witness most irrefragable, lies?  
 With speed an exile from this land depart,  
 Nor dare to enter Athens by the gods  
 Erected, or the bounds of my domain.  
 For if from thee I tamely should submit  
 To wrongs like these, no more would Sinnis tell  
 How erst I slew him at the Isthmian pass,  
 But say my boasts are vain ; nor would the rocks  
 Of Schiron, dashed by the surrounding waves,  
 Call me the scourge of villains.

CHOR.

At a loss

Am I of any mortal how to speak  
 As truly happy : for their lot who once  
 Were blest hath undergone a total change.

HIP. Though dreadful, O my father, is the wrath  
 And vehement commotion of your soul,  
 The charge against me which now seems so strong,  
 If duly searched into, will prove devoid  
 Of truth and honour. I am not expert  
 At an harangue before assembled crowds,  
 Though somewhat better qualified to speak  
 Among my youthful comrades, and where few  
 Are present : a sufficient cause for this  
 May be assigned ; for they who are held cheap  
 Among the wise, in more harmonious strains  
 Address the people. Yet am I constrained  
 By the severe emergency to burst  
 The bonds of silence, and begin my speech  
 With a discussion of that odious charge  
 By you first urged against me, to convict

And bar me from replying. Do your eyes  
Behold the sun and wide extent of earth ?  
Say, what you list ; of all the numerous tribes  
Who here were born, there's not a man more chaste  
Than I am : the first knowledge I acquired  
Was this—to reverence the immortal gods,  
And with those friends associate who attempt  
Nought by the laws condemned, but are endued  
With a deep sense of virtuous shame, and scorn  
Either themselves to practise or to aid  
Unseemly actions. I ne'er made a jest  
Of those whom I converse with, O my sire,  
But to my friends have still remained the same  
When they are absent as when near at hand :  
And above all, by that peculiar crime  
In which you think that you have caught me now,  
Am I untainted : by impure delight  
I to this day have never been enticed.  
Of love and its transactions nought I know,  
Except what I from casual talk have heard  
Or seen in pictures, but I am not eager  
To look on these, for still my soul retains  
Its virgin purity. But if no credence  
My spotless chastity with you should find,  
On you is it incumbent to show how  
I was corrupted. Did your consort's charms  
Eclipse all other women ? Could I hope  
Beneath your roofs to dwell, and with your wife  
That I the rich inheritance should gain ?  
This sure had been the highest pitch of folly.  
But what a bait is empire ! None at all  
To those who are discreet, unless a lust  
For kingly power already hath corrupted  
Those who delight in it O'er all the sons  
Of Greece, in every honourable strife,  
Is it my great ambition to prevail,  
And be the first ; but rather in the state  
Would I live happy with my dearest friends,  
And occupy the second rank : for bliss

Exempt from every danger, there is found,  
 Transcending all that royalty can give.  
 One thing there is by me not mentioned yet :  
 Though all beside already have you heard,  
 Had I a single witness like myself,  
 Of tried veracity, and could debate  
 With her while yet she lived, you from the fact,  
 After a strict inquiry, might decide  
 Which was the criminal. But now, by Jove,  
 Who guards the oath inviolate, I swear,  
 And by the conscious ground on which we tread,  
 That I your consort never did approach—  
 No, not in will or deed. May I expire  
 Stript of renown, and overwhelmed with shame,  
 Torn from my country, my paternal house,  
 An exile and a vagrant through the world,  
 Nor may the ocean or the earth receive  
 My breathless corse, if I have thus transgressed !  
 I know not whether 'twas through fear she lost  
 Her life, and more than this I must not say.  
 With her discretion amply hath supplied  
 The place of chastity ; I still have practised  
 That virtue, but, alas ! without success.

CHOR. Sufficient is it to refute the charge  
 That thou this oath hast taken, and called down  
 The powers immortal to attest its truth.

THE. Is he not rather an audacious cheat,  
 Trusting in magic arts, who dares to think  
 He by an oath can bias the resolves  
 Of his insulted sire ?

HIP. The part you act  
 Challenges my astonishment. Were you  
 My son, and I your father, had you dared  
 To violate my wife, I would not banish,  
 But kill you.

THE. Seasonable remark : the sentence  
 Which on thyself with justice thou hast passed  
 I will not now inflict ; for instant death  
 Is grateful to the wretched. But ordained





HIP. O mansions, would to Heaven that ye a voice  
Could utter, and your testimony give,  
Whether I have transgressed.

THE. Hast thou recourse  
To witnesses who lack the power of speech?  
Beyond all words this deed thy guilt displays.

HIP. In such position as to view my soul  
O could I stand, that I might cease to weep  
For the calamities I now endure!

THE. Thou thine own merits hast much more been wont  
To reverence, than with pious awe to treat  
Thy parents as thy duty doth enjoin.

HIP. Unhappy mother! wretched son! Avert  
The curse which on a spurious race attends,  
From those who share my friendship, righteous gods!

THE. Will ye not drag him from my sight, ye slaves?  
Did you not hear how I long since decreed  
He shall be banished!

HIP. They should rue it soon,  
If they presumed to touch me. But yourself  
May from these realms expel me if you list.

THE. If thou obey not these commands, I will:  
For I feel no compassion for thy exile.

[Exit THESEUS.]

HIP. The sentence is, it seems, already passed;  
Wretch that I am! My doom indeed I know,  
Yet know not in what language to express  
The pangs I feel. O thou to me most dear  
Of all the gods, Latona's virgin daughter,  
Who dwell'st with me, companion of the chase,  
Far from illustrious Athens let us fly;  
I to that city and Erectheus' land  
Now bid farewell. O thou Troezenian realm,  
Fraught with each varied pleasure youth admires,  
Adieu! I see thee now for the last time,  
And these last parting words to thee address:  
Come, O ye youths, my comrades, hither come,  
Speak kindly to me now, and till we reach  
The frontiers of this country, on my steps

Attend. For ye shall ne'er behold a man  
More chaste, though such I seem not to my sire.

[*Exit* HIPPOLYTUS.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

When I reflect on Heaven's just sway,  
Each anxious thought is driven away;  
But, ah! too soon, hope's flattering prospect ends,  
And in this harassed soul despair succeeds,  
When I compare with human deeds  
What fate those deeds attends.  
At each various period changing,  
Formed upon no settled plan,  
In a maze of errors ranging,  
Veers the precarious life of man.

I. 2.

May the kind gods' paternal care,  
Attentive to their votary's prayer,  
Grant unalloyed prosperity and wealth,  
Let me enjoy, without conspicuous fame.  
A character unstained by shame,  
With mental ease and health:  
Thus exempt from wrinkled sorrow,  
Would I ape the circling mode,  
Alter my conduct with the morrow,  
And snatch each pleasure as it flowed.

II. 1.

Now I a heart no longer pure  
Against the shocks of fortune can secure,  
But feel at length e'en hope itself expire:  
Since from the land we see that star, whose light  
On Athens shone serenely bright,  
Removed by Theseus' ire.  
Lament, thick scattered on the shore, ye sands,  
Where Trœzene's city stands,  
And steep mountains, which ascending

With thy hounds to trace the prey,  
 Thou, Hippolytus, attending  
 Dictynna, the swift hind didst slay.

## II. 2.

No longer the Hennetian steeds,  
 Yoked to thy chariot, o'er yon sacred meads  
 Around the ring, wilt thou expertly guide.  
 The Muse, whose lyre is doomed to sound no more,  
 Shall the paternal house deplore,  
 Bereft of thee its pride.  
 For Dian's haunts beneath th' embowering shade  
 Now no hand the wreath will braid.  
 Thou art from this region banished,  
 Hence is Hymen's torch decayed:  
 All prospects of thy love are vanished,  
 The rivalry of many a maid.

## III.

By thy calamity inspired,  
 With plaintive strains will I bewail thy fate,  
 O wretched mother, who in vain  
 The throes of childbirth didst sustain.  
 I with indignant hate  
 Against the gods themselves am fired.  
 Ah, gentle graces, smiling at his birth,  
 Could not you screen by your benignant power  
 Your guiltless votary, in an evil hour  
 Sentenced to wander far from his paternal earth?  
 The servant of Hippolytus, with looks  
 Which witness grief, I see in haste approach.

## MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MES. Ye matrons, whither shall I speed my course  
 To find the royal Theseus? If ye know,  
 Inform me; is the monarch here within?

CHOR. Forth from the palace he in person comes.

## THESEUS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MES. O Theseus, the intelligence I bring  
 Deserves the serious thoughts of you, and all

The citizens who, or in Athens dwell,  
Or on the borders of Trœzene's land.

THE. What mean'st thou? Hath some recent woe  
befallen  
These two adjacent cities?

MES. In one word,  
To sum up all, Hippolytus is dead;  
For he but for a moment views the sun.

THE. Say, by what ho-tile arm the miscreant fell.  
Did any one, whose wife with brutal force,  
As late his father's, he defiled, assail him?

MES. The fiery coursers who his chariot drew  
Destroyed him, and the curses you addressed  
To the stern ruler of the deep, your sire,  
Against your son.

THE. Thanks, O ye righteous gods;  
Now, Neptune, hast thou proved thyself my father,  
Since thou my imprecations hast fulfilled.  
Inform me how he perished, how the sword  
Of justice smote the villain who hath wronged me.

MES. We, near the beach, oft dashed by the hoarse  
waves  
Of ocean, smoothed his generous coursers' manes,  
Yet weeping. For a messenger arrived  
With tidings that Hippolytus no more  
Would to this realm be suffered to return,  
Sentenced by you to miserable exile.  
But, to confirm this piteous tale, soon came  
The banished prince, and joined us on the strand,  
A numerous group of comrades on his steps  
Attended. After a long pause, he said,  
Ceasing his plaints: "Why still should I lament  
My doom, my father's word must be obeyed:  
Those steeds, ye servants, harness to the car;  
Trœzene is no longer my abode."  
Soon as we heard, all hastened: these commands  
Scarce was there time to issue, when we brought  
The ready coursers harnessed to their lord:  
Mounting his chariot then the reins he seized,

When he his feet had in strong buskins clad :  
But first with hands outspread invoked the gods,  
And cried : " O righteous Jove, here end my life  
If I have sinned : but let my father know  
How much he wrongs us, whether we expire  
Or still behold the light." With lifted thong  
The rapid coursers onward then he drove ;  
We servants close behind our master's car  
Followed, along the Epidaurian road,  
Which leads direct to Argos. But at length,  
Passing the limits of this realm, we entered  
A wilderness adjoining to the coast  
Of the Saronian deep : a dreadful sound  
Was from the inmost caverns of the earth  
Sent forth, like Jove's own thunder, while the steeds,  
Astonished, with their heads and ears erect  
Towards Heaven, stopped short. An instant terror seized  
On all of us ; we wondered whence the sound  
Could issue, till at length, as on the beach  
We looked, a mighty wave we saw, which reached  
The skies, and from our view concealed the cliffs  
Of Sciron, the whole isthmus covered o'er,  
And Æsculapius' rock, then to a size  
The most enormous swollen, and pouring forth  
With loud explosion foam on every side,  
The tide impelled it onward to the coast  
Where stood the harnessed steeds ; amid the storm  
And whirlwind's rage the wave disgorged a bull,  
Ferocious monster, with whose bellowings filled,  
All earth resounded horribly : our eyes  
Scarce could endure the sight. With panic fear  
The steeds were seized that instant : but meantime  
Their lord, who to the managing them long  
Had been inured, caught up with both his hands  
The reins, and drew them tight, as the rude oar  
A sailor plies ; exerting all his strength,  
Then backward leaned, and twisted them around  
His body : but the raging coursers gnashed  
Their steely curbs, and scoured along the field

Regardless of the hand that steered their course,  
 Or rein or polished car. Along the plain,  
 If he attempted their career to guide,  
 'The bull in front appeared, to turn them back,  
 And e'en to madness scared : but if they ran  
 Close to the shelving rocks with frantic rage,  
 He, silently approaching, followed hard  
 Behind the chariot ; 'gainst a rugged cliff,  
 Till he the wheel directing, had o'erthrown  
 The vehicle. 'Twas dire confusion all :  
 Upward the spokes and shivered axle flew ;  
 The hapless youth, entangled in the reins,  
 Confined by an inextricable bond,  
 Was dragged along ; against the rock his head  
 With violence was dashed, and his whole body  
 Received full many a wound. These horrid words  
 He uttered with a shriek : " Stop, O my steeds,  
 Nor kill the master in whose stalls ye fed !  
 O dreadful imprecations of my sire !  
 Who is at hand to save a virtuous man ? "  
 Though many wished to rescue him, too late  
 We came. But from the broken reins released,  
 At length, I know not by what means, he fell,  
 In a small portion yet the breath of life  
 Retaining. But the horses, from all eyes,  
 And that accursed monster, were concealed  
 Among the mountains, where I cannot tell.  
 Though I indeed, O king, am in your house  
 A servant, yet I never can be brought  
 To think your son was with such guilt defiled,  
 Though the whole race of women should expire  
 Suspended in the noose, and every pine  
 On Ida's summit were with letters filled ;  
 So well am I convinced that he was virtuous.

CHOR. The measure of our recent woes is full :  
 No means, alas, are left for us to 'scape  
 The sentence of unalterable fate.

THE. From hatred to the man who hath endured  
 These sufferings I with pleasure heard thy tale :

But now through a just reverence for the gods,  
And for that wretch, because he was my son,  
I from his woes nor joy nor sorrow feel.

MES. But whither must we bear the dying youth,  
To gratify your wish, or how proceed?  
Consider well: but if you would adopt  
My counsels, you with harshness would not treat  
Your hapless son.

THE. The miscreant hither bring;  
That I, when face to face I shall behold  
Him who denies that he my nuptial bed  
Polluted, may convict him by my words,  
And these calamities the gods inflict. [*Exit MESSENGER.*]

CHOR. To yours, O Venus, and your son's control,  
Whose glittering pinions speed his flight,  
The gods incline their stubborn soul,  
And mortals yielding to resistless might.

For, o'er land and stormy main,  
Love is borne, who can restrain

By more than magic art  
Each furious impulse of the heart:  
Savage whelps on mountains bred,  
Monsters in the ocean fed,

All who on earth behold the solar ray,  
And man, his mild behests obey.

For you, O Venus, you alone  
Sit on an unrivalled throne,  
By each duteous votary feared,  
As a mighty queen revered.

DIANA, THESEUS, CHORUS.

DIA. Thee, sprung from noble Aegeus, I command  
To listen, for to thee Diana speaks,  
The daughter of Latona. Why, O Theseus,  
Do these disastrous tidings fill thy heart  
With pleasure, when unjustly thou hast slain  
Thy son, the false assertions of thy consort  
On no clear proof believing? Yet too clear  
Is the atrocious guilt thou hast incurred.

Covered with shame, why hid'st thou not thy head  
 In gloomy Tartarus, in the realms beneath ;  
 Or, this abhorred pollution to escape,  
 On active wings why mount'st thou not the skies ?  
 In the society of virtuous men  
 Thou canst not pass the remnant of thy life.  
 Hear me, O Theseus, while I state the ills  
 In which thou art involved : though now to thee  
 It can avail no longer, thy regret  
 Will I excite. The purposes I came for  
 Are these : to show that to thy son belongs  
 An upright heart, how to preserve his fame  
 His life he loses, and that frantic rage  
 Thy consort seized, whose conduct hath in part  
 Been generous : for, with lawless passion stung,  
 By that pernicious goddess, whom myself,  
 And all to whom virginity is dear,  
 Peculiarly abhor, she loved thy son,  
 And while she strove by reason to o'ercome  
 Th' assaults of Venus, unconsenting fell  
 By those vile stratagems her nurse devised,  
 Who to thy son the queen's disease revealed  
 Under the awful sanction of an oath ;  
 But he, by justice rendered strong, complied not  
 With her solicitations, yet no wrongs  
 Which he from thee experienced could provoke  
 The pious youth to violate that faith  
 Which he had sworn to. She meanwhile alarmed,  
 Lest to his father he her guilt should prove,  
 Wrote that deceitful letter, on thy soul  
 Gaining too prompt a credence, and thy son  
 Hath by her baleful artifice destroyed.

THE.

Ah me !

DIA. Doth what I have already spoken,  
 O Theseus, wound thee ? To the sequel lend  
 A patient ear, and thou shalt find just cause  
 To wail yet more. Thou know'st thy sire engaged  
 That thy petitions thrice he would fulfil ;  
 And one of these, O thou most impious man,







HIP. From celestial lips  
How doth a fragrant odour breathe around !  
Amid my sufferings thee did I perceive,  
The pangs I feel were instantly assuaged.  
Diana sure is here.

DIA.                Beside thee stands  
Thy favourite goddess.

HIP. Dost thou see my woes,  
O thou whom I adore?

DIA.                      These eyes behold  
What thou endur'st ; but they no tear must shed.

HIP. Thy faithful comrade in the sylvan chase,  
Thy votary is no more.

DIA. Alas ! no more !  
Yet e'en in death to me thou still art dear.

HIP. Nor he who drove thy fiery steeds, and watched  
Thy images.

DIA.        These stratagems, by Venus,  
From whom all mischief takes its rise, were planned.

HIP. Too well I know the goddess who destroyed me.

DIA. For her neglected homage much enraged  
Against thee, to the chaste a constant foe.

HIP. U's three I find her hatred hath undone.

DIA. Thy father, thou, and his unhappy wife  
Complete that number.

HIP. I bewail my sire.

DIA. Him by her arts that goddess hath misled.

HIP. To you, my father, this event hath proved  
A source of woes abundant.

THE. O my son,  
I perish, and in life have now no joy.

HIP. Yet more for you, who have been thus deluded,  
Than for myself, I grieve.

THE. My son, I gladly  
Would die to save thee.

HIP. Fatal gifts of Neptune  
Your father.

THE. Now most earnestly I wish  
These lips had never uttered such a prayer.

HIP. What then? You would have slain me, such your wrath.

THE. Because I by the gods was then deprived  
Of understanding.

HIP. O that in return

Mankind could with their curses blast the gods!

DIA. Be pacified: for in earth's darksome caves,  
The rage of Venus who on thee hath wreaked  
Such horrors for thy pure and virtuous soul  
I will not suffer unatoned to rest.

For in requital, my vindictive hand  
With these inevitable darts shall smite  
The dearest of her votaries. But on thee  
These sufferings to reward will I bestow  
The greatest honours in Trœzene's realm:  
For to thy shade, ere jocund Hymen wave  
The kindled torch, each nymph her tresses shorn  
Shall dedicate, and with abundant tears  
For a long season thy decease bewail.  
In their harmonious ditties the chaste choir  
Of virgins ever shall record thy fate,  
Nor pass unnoticed Phædra's hapless love.  
But, O thou son of Ægeus, in those arms  
Embrace the dying youth; for 'gainst thy will  
Didst thou destroy him. When the gods ordain  
That man should err, he cannot disobey.  
This counsel, O Hippolytus, to thee  
I give; no hatred to thy father bear,  
For well thou know'st from whence thy fate arose.  
And now farewell! for I am not allowed  
To view unholy corpses of the slain,  
Or with the pangs of those who breathe their last  
Pollute these eyes: too clearly I discern  
That thou art near the moment of thy death. [*Exit DIANA*]

HIP. Farewell, blest virgin, grieve not thus to part  
From a most faithful votary, who with thee  
Hath long held converse. With my sire I end  
All strife at thy behest; for to thy words  
I still have been obedient. Wretched me!  
Already thickest darkness overspreads

These swimming eyes. My father, in your arms  
Receive me, and support this sinking frame.

THE. How, O my son, dost thou increase my woes !

HIP. I perish, and already view the gates  
Of yon drear realms beneath.

THE. But wilt thou leave  
My soul polluted ?

HIP. No, from the foul crime  
You I absolve.

THE. What saidst thou ? Shall the stain  
Of having shed thy blood no longer rest  
On me thy murderer ?

HIP. Let Diana witness,  
Who with her shafts subdues the savage brood.

THE. How generous is this treatment of thy sire,  
My dearest son !

HIP. Farewell ! a long adieu  
I bid to you, my father.

THE. Ah, how pious,  
How virtuous is thy soul !

HIP. Implore the gods  
That all your race legitimate may tread  
In the same path.

THE. Desert me not, my son :  
Take courage.

HIP. It is now, alas ! too late,  
For, O my sire, I die. Make no delay,  
But with this garment cover o'er my face. [He dies.]

THE. Minerva's fortress, thou Athenian realm,  
Of what a virtuous prince art thou deprived !  
Ah, wretched me ! how oft shall I reflect,  
O Venus, on the ills which thou hast caused.

CHOR. On our whole city hath this public loss  
Fallen unforeseen. Abundant tears shall flow.  
When bleed the mighty, their sad history leaves  
A more profound impression on the heart.



III

HECUBA

*AND OTHER PLAYS*





### III

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## INTRODUCTION.

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WE left the history of the House of Tantalus with a reference to Helen, as we find her in the translated play which is among those which here complete the collection of the extant works of Euripides.

Menelaus sent ambassadors to Troy to demand back Helen, his wife, whom Paris had carried off. The counsels of Antenor were set aside at Troy, by the persuasions of Paris that gave occasion to the Siege of Troy. Agamemnon, on the throne of the deposed Thyestes, had extended his dominion. Homer gave him command over a hundred ships in the expedition against Troy. Some were from Mycene, which although but six or seven miles from Argos had been capital of a separate kingdom until it was reunited to Argos after the defeat and death of Eurystheus; and when Agamemnon succeeded his father Atreus, he enlarged and beautified Mycene. Twenty-eight unsuccessful suitors of Helen were summoned by Menelaus to contribute aid, and under command of the strongest of the confederates, Agamemnon—who was the brother of Menelaus, and who then had by his wife Clytemnestra three daughters, Iphigenia, Chrysothemis, and Electra, also one son, Orestes, then an infant—the expedition sailed for Troy.

But first, when the confederate fleets met as agreed, in the haven of Aulis they were stayed by a dead calm. Guidance was sought from the Oracle, and the soothsayer Calchas reminded Agamemnon of a vow made in the year of Iphigenia's birth that he would sacrifice to Diana the most beautiful production of the year. That was his daughter, Iphigenia, whom now Diana claimed. The fleet would remain bound in Aulis until the sacrifice of Iphigenia. The story of the sacrifice, of the anger of the maiden's mother Clytemnestra, and her lover Achilles, is told by Euripides in his "Iphigenia in Aulis." The Goddess in the act of sacrifice miraculously substituted a hind for the daughter, whom she wafted in a cloud to her temple among the Scythians at Tauris, where she became a Priestess,

and where it was the custom of the barbarous people to sacrifice every Greek who landed on their shores.

In the siege of Troy, Paris was slain by the arrows of Philoctetes. Helen then married his brother Deiphobus, whom she betrayed to the Greeks. When she came again into the hands of Menelaus, he was soon reconciled to her. In returning from the ten years' siege of Troy, many of the companions of Agamemnon were lost by wreck on the coast of Eubœa, where the father of Palamedes, to avenge the unjust killing of his son in the camp of the Greeks, had set up false lights. Agamemnon came safely to Argos with the captive prophetess Cassandra, whom he intended for himself. This was a new affront to Clytemnestra; who remembered the murder of her first husband Tantalus and her first infant, who remembered also the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and who had found a paramour in Ægisthus, son of Thyestes. Clytemnestra murdered Agamemnon with an axe as he was coming out of the bath, and then married Ægisthus, who took Agamemnon's throne.

The young Orestes was saved from his stepfather by a faithful servant, who carried him to Phocis, and there put him under the protection of Strophius. Electra remained at Argos and was married to a peasant, lest a husband powerful in the State should help to restore to their birthrights the children of Agamemnon.

When Orestes had passed out of childhood, he went for guidance to the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, and was directed to avenge the murder of his father. He went then, with his inseparable friend Pylades, in disguise to Argos, and was received in a cottage on the boundary of Argos, by Electra and her peasant husband. He learnt that the peasant, strongly attached to the family of Agamemnon, had cancelled the wrong intended by Ægisthus, and had never claimed rights of a husband. Electra was still a maiden princess. Brother and sister then devised and carried out a plan for the killing of their mother Clytemnestra and Ægisthus.

But when the hands of Orestes were stained with his mother's blood, the Furies rose from Hell, and drove him to distraction. Six days after the murder of Clytemnestra, the citizens of Argos met to pass sentence on Orestes and Electra. Menelaus after a voyage from Troy of seven years' long delays, then landed at Nauplia near Argos, and would have helped his nephew Orestes; but he gave up Orestes and Electra to the people of Argos upon being told by Tyndarus that if he interfered he should never return to Sparta. The Council of Argos gave leave to Orestes and Electra to carry out upon themselves its sentence of death. After consulting with Pylades they resolved to kill Helen and seize their uncle's one daughter, Hermione, as hostage. Helen had vanished; Menelaus breathed revenge; Apollo descended to save Orestes from his uncle, and from the people, by declaring

that Orestes had done what the gods required. But Apollo bade him cleanse away pollution of his mother's blood by a year's banishment, after which he was to submit himself to the judgment of the Areopagus at Athens.

Before the Areopagus one of the Furies was his accuser, Apollo witnessed in his favour. The votes of the Court were equal, and Athens gave the casting vote for his acquittal. But still the Furies were implacable, and Orestes, again appealing to Apollo's Oracle, was ordered to bring the statue of Diana from Tauris to Athens. Orestes sailed upon this mission with Pylades, whom he had affianced to his sister Electra. When the friends landed on the coast of Tauris, the barbarous people seized them and they were carried to Iphigenia to be sacrificed according to the custom of the land. When on the point of being sacrificed, discovery was made, and, with help of Minerva, not only the image of the goddess Diana, but also Iphigenia her priestess, was conveyed to Athens, in whose territories, at Brauronia, Iphigenia remained priestess until her death.

Meanwhile Menelaus had married his only daughter, Hermione, to Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles. Neoptolemus, who had offended Apollo by making the god answerable for the death of Achilles, went to Delphi to appease his wrath. Orestes, who sought Hermione for wife, went also to Delphi and persuaded the people there that Neoptolemus sought plunder of the temple. Neoptolemus was, therefore, murdered by the people of Delphi, as he was going unarmed to the temple to propitiate the god. Then Orestes carried off Hermione, and married her, at the same time when his sister Electra was married to Pylades. The plays of Euripides here leave Orestes; ruler on the throne of Agamemnon, reconciled to Menelaus, and married to Hermione, through whom, by right of her mother Helen and her father Menelaus, he may hope to bring also under his rule the dominions of Sparta.

Here ends an abstract of an abstract of the History of the House of Tantalus, as given by Michael Wodhull, Esq., to show the relations to each other of the stories upon which Euripides based many of his plays.

This volume completes our set of English versions of all extant plays of Euripides.

H. M.

*April 1868.*



# EURIPIDES.

## HECUBA.

### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

POLYDORE'S GHOST.

HECUBA.

CHORUS OF CAPTIVE TROJAN

DAMES.

POLYXENA.

ULYSSES.

FEMALE ATTENDANT OF HECUBA.

AGAMEMNON.

POLYMESTOR.

TALTHYBIUS.

SCENE.—THE THRACIAN CHERSONESUS.

### THE GHOST OF POLYDORE.

LEAVING the cavern of the dead, and gates  
Of darkness, where from all the gods apart  
Dwells Pluto, come I Polydore, the son  
Of Hecuba from royal Cisseus sprung,  
And Priam, who, when danger threatened Troy,  
Fearing his city by the Grecian arms  
Would be laid low in dust, from Phrygia's realm  
In privacy conveyed me to the house  
Of Polymestor, of his Thracian friend,  
Who tills the Chersonesus' fruitful soil,  
Ruling a nation famed for generous steeds ;  
But secretly, with me, abundant gold  
My father sent, that his surviving children  
Might lack no sustenance, if Ilion's walls  
Should by the foe be levelled with the ground.  
I was the youngest of all Priam's sons,  
By stealth he therefore sent me from the realm ;  
Nor could my feeble arm sustain the shield,  
Or launch the javelin : but while yet entire  
Each ancient landmark on our frontiers stood,  
The turrets of the Phrygian state remained  
Unshaken, and my brother Hector's spear

Prospered in battle ; nurtured by the man  
 Of Thrace, my father's friend. I, wretched youth,  
 Grew like a vigorous scion. But when Troy,  
 When Hector failed, when my paternal dome  
 Was from its basis rent, and Priam's self,  
 My aged father, at the altar bled  
 Which to the gods his pious hands had reared,  
 Butchered by curst Achilles' ruthless son ;  
 Me, his unhappy guest, my father's friend  
 Slew for the sake of gold, and having slain,  
 Plunged me into the sea, that he might keep  
 Those treasures in his house. My breathless corse,  
 In various eddies by the rising waves  
 Of ocean tost, lies on the craggy shore,  
 Unwept, unburied. But by filial love  
 For Hecuba now prompted, I ascend  
 A disembodied ghost, and thrice have seen  
 The morning dawn, to Chersonesus land,  
 Since my unhappy mother came from Troy.  
 But all the Grecian army, in their ships,  
 Here anchoring on this coast of Thrace remain  
 Inactive ; for appearing on his tomb  
 Achilles, Peleus' son, restrained the troops,  
 Who homeward else had steered their barks, and claims  
 Polyxena my sister, as a victim  
 Most precious at his sepulchre to bleed ;  
 And her will he obtain, nor will his friends  
 Withhold the gift ; for fate this day decrees  
 That she shall die : my mother must behold  
 Two of her slaughtered children's corpses, mine,  
 And this unhappy maid's—that in a tomb  
 I may be lodged, where the firm beach resists  
 The waves, I to her servant will appear,  
 Since from the powers of hell I have obtained  
 The privilege of honourable interment,  
 And that a mother's hand these rites perform :  
 I shall accomplish what my soul desired.  
 But on the aged Hecuba's approach,  
 Far hence must I retreat ; for from the tent  
 Of Agamemnon she comes forth, alarmed  
 By my pale spectre. O my wretched mother,  
 How art thou torn from princely roofs to view  
 This hour of servitude ! what sad reverse  
 Of fortune ! some malignant god hath balanced  
 Thy present misery 'gainst thy former bliss.

[Exit.

HECUBA, attended by TROJAN DAMSELS.

HEC. Forth from these doors, ye gentle virgins, lead me,  
 A weak old woman : O ye nymphs of Troy,



Support your fellow-servant, once your queen  
 Bear me along, uphold my tottering frame,  
 And take me by this aged hand : your arm  
 Shall be my staff to lean on, while I strive  
 My tardy pace to quicken. O ye lightnings  
 Of Jove, O Night in tenfold darkness wrap,  
 By such terrific phantoms from my couch  
 Why am I scared? Thou venerable earth,  
 Parent of dreams that flit on raven wing;  
 The vision I abhor, which I in sleep  
 This night have seen, relating to my son,  
 Who here is fostered in the Thracian realm,  
 And to Polyxena my dearest daughter ;  
 For I too clearly saw and understood  
 The meaning of that dreadful apparition ;  
 Ye tutelary gods of this domain,  
 Preserve the only anchor of our house,  
 My son, who dwells in Thracian fields, o'erspread  
 With snow, protected by his father's friend,  
 Some fresh event awaits us, and ere long  
 By accents most unwelcome shall the ear  
 Of wretchedness be wounded : till this hour,  
 By such incessant horrors, such alarms,  
 My soul was never seized. Where shall I view  
 The soul of Helenus, on whom the god  
 Bestowed prophetic gifts, ye Phrygian maidens ?  
 Where my Cassandra to unfold the dream ?  
 With bloody fangs I saw a wolf, who slew  
 A dappled hind, which forcibly he tore  
 From these reluctant arms, and what increased  
 My fears, was this—Achilles' spectre stalked  
 Upon the summit of his tomb, and claimed  
 A gift, some miserable Trojan captive.  
 You therefore I implore, ye gods, avert  
 Such doom from my loved daughter,

## CHORUS, HECUBA.

CHOR. I to thee,  
 To thee, O Hecuba, with breathless speed,  
 Fly from the tents of our impetuous lords,  
 Where I by lot have been assigned, and doomed  
 To be a slave, driven by the pointed spear  
 From Troy ; by their victorious arms the Greeks  
 Have made me captive : nothing can I bring,  
 Thy sorrows to alleviate ; but to thee  
 Laden with heaviest tidings am I come  
 The herald of affliction. For 'tis said,  
 Greece in full council hath resolved thy daughter  
 A victim to Achilles shall be given.

The warrior mounting on his tomb, thou know'st,  
 Appeared in golden armour, and restrained  
 The fleet just ready to unfurl its sails,  
 Exclaiming, "Whither would ye steer your course,  
 Ye Greeks, and leave no offering on my grave?"  
 A storm of violent contention rose,  
 And two opinions in the martial synod  
 Of Greece went forth; the victim, some maintained,  
 Ought on the sepulchre to bleed, and some  
 Such offering disapproved. But Agamemnon,  
 Who shares the bed of the Prophetic Dame,  
 Espoused thy interest; while the sons of Theseus,  
 Branches from the Athenian root, discussed  
 The question largely in each point of view,  
 But in the same opinion both concurred,  
 And said that never should Cassandra's love  
 To great Achilles' valour be preferred:  
 Equally balanced the debate still hung,  
 When he, that crafty orator, endued  
 With sweetest voice, the favourite of the crowd,  
 Laertes' son, persuaded all the host,  
 Not to reject the first of Grecian chiefs,  
 And yield the preference to a victim slave:  
 Lest some vindictive ghost, before the throne  
 Of Proserpine arising, might relate  
 How Greece, unmindful of her generous sons,  
 Who nobly perished for their native land,  
 From Ilion's fields departed. In a moment  
 Ulysses will come hither, from thy breast,  
 And aged arms to drag the tender maid.  
 But to the temples, to the altars, go,  
 In suppliant posture clasp Atrides' knees,  
 Invoke the gods of heaven and hell beneath,  
 For either thou wilt by thy prayers avert  
 Thy daughter's fate, else must thou at the tomb  
 Behold the virgin fall distained with gore,  
 And gushing from her neck a crimson stream.

HEC. Wretch that I am! ah me! what clamorous sounds,  
 What words, what plaints, what dirges shall I find,  
 Expressive of the anguish which I feel?  
 Opprest by miserable old age, bowed down  
 Under a load of servitude too heavy  
 To be endured: what sanctuary remains,  
 What valiant race, what city will protect me?  
 The hoary Priam is no more, my sons  
 Are now no more. Or to this path, or that,  
 Shall I direct my steps? or whither go?  
 Where shall I find some tutelary god?  
 Ye Phrygian captives, messengers of ill,

O ye who with unwelcome tidings fraught,  
Come hither, ye have ruined me. The orb  
Of day shall never rise to fill this breast  
With any comfort more. Ye luckless feet,  
Bear an infirm old woman to the tent  
Of our captivity. Come forth, my daughter,  
Come forth and listen to thy mother's voice,  
That thou may'st know the rumour I have heard,  
In which thy life is interested.

POLYXENA, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POLYX. O mother,  
What mean you by those shrieks? what fresh event  
Proclaiming, from my chamber, like a bird,  
Have you constrained me, urged by fear, to speed  
My flight?

HEC. Ah, daughter!

POLYX. With foreboding voice,  
Why do you call me? these are evil omens.

HEC. Alas! thy life, Polyxena.

POLYX. Speak out,  
Nor aggravate the horrors yet untold  
By long suspense. I fear, O mother, much  
I fear. What mean those oft repeated groans?

HEC. Thou child of a most miserable mother!

POLYX. Why speak you thus?

HEC. The Greeks, with one consent,  
Resolve that on the tomb of Peleus' son  
Thou shalt be sacrificed.

POLYX. What boundless woes  
Are these which to your daughter you announce!  
Yet, O my mother, with the tale proceed.

HEC. Of a most horrible report I speak,  
Which says, that, by the suffrage of the Greeks,  
It is resolved to take away thy life.

POLYX. O, my unhappy mother, doomed to suffer  
Wrongs the most dreadful, doomed to lead a life  
Of utter wretchedness: what grievous curse,  
Such as no language can express, on you  
Hath some malignant demon hurled! no more  
Can I, your daughter, share the galling yoke  
Of servitude with your forlorn old age;  
For like some lion's whelp, or heifer bred  
Upon the mountains, hurried from your arms  
Shall you behold me, and with severed head  
Consigned to Pluto's subterraneous realms  
Of darkness, there among the silent dead,  
Wretch that I am, shall I be laid. These tears  
Of bitter lamentation I for you,

For you, O mother, shed : but my own life  
I heed not, nor the shame, nor fatal stroke,  
For I in death a happier lot obtain.

CHOR. To thee, O Hecuba, with hasty step  
Behold Ulysses some new message brings.

ULYSSES, HECUBA, POLYXENA, CHORUS,

ULY. Though I presume the counsels of our troops  
And their decision are already known  
To thee, O woman, yet must I repeat  
Th' unwelcome tidings ; at Achilles' tomb,  
Polyxena, thy daughter, have the Greeks  
Resolved to slay ; me to attend the virgin  
Have they commanded : but Achilles' son  
Is at the altar destined to preside,  
And be the priest. Know'st thou thy duty then ?  
Constrain us not to drag her from those arms  
With violence, nor strive with me ; but learn  
The force of thy inevitable woes :  
For there is wisdom, e'en when we are wretched,  
In following reason's dictates.

HEC. Now, alas !  
It seems a dreadful struggle is at hand,  
With groans abounding and unnumbered tears.  
I died not at the time I ought to die,  
Neither did Jove destroy me ; he still spares  
My life, that I may view fresh woes, yet greater,  
Wretch that I am, than all my former woes.  
But if a slave, who not with bitter taunt,  
Or keen reproach, her questions doth propose,  
Might speak to freemen, now 'tis time for you  
To cease, and give me audience while I ask——

ULY. Allowed, proceed ; for I without reluctance  
Will grant thee time.

HEC. Remember you when erst  
You came to Troy a spy, in tattered garb  
Disguised, and from your eyes upon your beard  
Fell tears extorted by the dread of death ?

ULY. I well remember : for by that event  
My inmost heart was touched.

HEC. But Helen knew you,  
And told me only.

ULY. I can ne'er forget  
Into what danger I was fallen.

HEC. My knees  
You in a lowly posture did embrace.

ULY. And to thy garment clung with faltering hand.

HEC. At length I saved and from our land dismissed you.

ULY. Hence I the solar beams yet view.

HEC. What language  
Did you then hold, when subject to my power?

ULY. Full many were the words which I devised  
To save my life.

HEC. Doth not your guilt appear  
 From your own counsels? Though your tongue avows  
 The generous treatment you from me received  
 No benefit on me do you confer,  
 But strive to harm me. O ungrateful race  
 Of men, who aim at popular applause  
 By your smooth speeches; would to Heaven I ne'er  
 Had known you, for ye heed not how ye wound  
 Your friends, whene'er ye can say ought to win  
 The crowd. But what pretence could they devise  
 For sentencing this virgin to be slain?  
 Are they constrained by fate, with human victims,  
 To drench the tomb on which they rather ought  
 To sacrifice the steer? or doth Achilles  
 Demand her life with justice, to retaliate  
 Slaughter on them who slaughtered? But to him  
 Hath she done nought injurious. He should claim  
 Helen as victim at his tomb, for she  
 His ruin caused by leading him to Troy.  
 If it was needful that some chosen captive  
 Distinguished by transcendent charms should die,  
 We were not meant; for the perfidious daughter  
 Of Tyndarus is most beauteous, and her crimes  
 To ours at least are equal. Justice only  
 In this debate supports me: hear how large  
 The debt which 'tis your duty to repay  
 On my petition: you confess you touched  
 My hand, and these my aged cheeks, in dust  
 Grovelling a suppliant; yours I now embrace,  
 From you the kindness which I erst bestowed  
 Again implore, and sue to you: O tear not  
 My daughter from these arms, nor slay the maid:  
 Sufficient is the number of the slain.  
 In her I yet rejoice, in her forget  
 My woes; she, for the loss of many children,  
 Consols me, I in her a country find,  
 A nurse, a staff, a guide. The mighty ought not  
 To issue lawless mandates, nor should they,  
 On whom propitious fortunes now attend,  
 Think that their triumphs will for ever last:  
 For I was happy once, but am no more,  
 My bliss all vanished in a single day.  
 Yet, O my friend, revere and pity me,  
 Go to the Grecian host, admonish them  
 How horrible an action 'twere to slay

These captive women whom at first ye spared,  
 And pitied when ye dragged them from the altars.  
 For by your laws 'tis equally forbidden  
 To spill the blood of freemen, or of slave.  
 Although you weakly argue, will your rank  
 Convince them : for the self-same speech, when uttered  
 By the ignoble, and men well esteemed,  
 Comes not with equal force.

CHOR.

The human soul

Is not so flinty as to hear the woes  
 And plaintive strains thou lengthen'st out, nor shed  
 The sympathizing tear.

ULY.

To me attend,

O Hecuba, nor through resentment deem  
 That from a foe such counsels can proceed :  
 I am disposed to save thee, and now hold  
 No other language : but will not deny  
 What I to all have said ; since Troy is taken,  
 On the first warrior of the host who asks  
 A victim, should thy daughter be bestowed.  
 The cause why many cities are diseased  
 Is this : the brave and generous man obtains  
 No honourable distinction to exalt him  
 Above the coward. But from us, O woman,  
 Achilles claims such homage, who for Greece  
 Died nobly. Is not this a foul reproach,  
 If, while our friends yet live, we seek their aid,  
 But after death ungratefully forget  
 Past services ? Should armed bands once more  
 Assemble, and renew the bloody strife,  
 Will not some hardy veteran thus exclaim :  
 " Shall we go forth to battle, or indulge  
 The love of life, now we have seen the dead  
 Obtain no honours ? " While from day to day  
 I live, though I have little, yet that little  
 For every needful purpose will suffice.  
 But may conspicuous trophies o'er my grave  
 Be planted, for such tribute to my name  
 Will last to after-ages. If thou call  
 Thy sufferings piteous, hear what in reply  
 We have to urge ; amidst the Grecian camp  
 Are many aged dames, as miserable  
 As thou art, with full many a hoary sire,  
 And weeping bride, torn from her valiant lord,  
 O'er whose remains hath Ida's dust been strewn.  
 Support thy woes : if with mistaken zeal  
 We have resolved to honour the deceased,  
 Our crime is ignorance : but ye barbarians  
 Pay no distinction to your friends, no homage

To the illustrious dead ; hence Greece prevails ;  
 But ye from your pernicious counsels reap  
 The bitter fruits they merit.

CHOR. Ah, what ills  
 Ever attend the captive state, subdued  
 By brutal violence, and forced t' endure  
 Unseemly wrongs.

HEC. Those words I vainly spoke  
 Thy slaughter to avert, in air were lavished ;  
 But, O my daughter, if thy power exceed  
 Thy mother's, like the nightingale send forth  
 Each warbled note, to save thy life, excite,  
 By falling at his knees, Ulysses' pity,  
 And on this ground, because he too hath children,  
 Entreat him to compassionate thy doom.

POLYX. I see thee, O Ulysses, thy right hand  
 Beneath thy robe concealing, see thee turn  
 Thy face away, lest I should touch thy beard.  
 Be of good cheer ; I'll not call down the wrath  
 Of Jove who guards the suppliant, but will follow  
 Thy steps, because necessity ordains  
 And 'tis my wish to die ; if I were loth,  
 I should appear to be an abject woman,  
 And fond of life : but what could lengthened life  
 Avail to me, whose father erst was lord  
 Of the whole Phrygian realm ? Thus first I drew  
 My breath beneath the roofs of regal domes ;  
 Then was I nurtured with the flattering hope  
 That I should wed a monarch, and arrive  
 At the proud mansion of some happy youth.  
 Ill-fated princess, thus I stood conspicuous  
 Amid the dames and brightest nymphs of Troy,  
 In all but immortality a goddess ;  
 But now am I a slave, and the first cause  
 Which makes me wish to die, is that abhorred  
 Unwonted name ; else some inhuman lord  
 With gold perchance might purchase me, the sister  
 Of Hector, and full many a valiant chief,  
 Might make me knead the bread, and sweep the floor,  
 And ply the loom, and pass my abject days  
 In bitterness of woe : some servile mate  
 Might bring dishonour to my bed, though erst  
 I was deemed worthy of a sceptred king :  
 Not thus. These eyes shall to the last behold  
 The light of freedom. O ye shades receive  
 A princess. Lead me on then, O Ulysses,  
 And as thou lead'st despatch me, for no hope,  
 No ground for thinking, I shall e'er be happy,  
 Can I discern : yet hinder not by word



Or deed the steadfast purpose I have formed ;  
 But, O my mother, in this wish concur  
 With me, that I may die ere I endure  
 Such wrongs as suit not my exalted rank.  
 For whosoe'er hath not been used to taste  
 Of sorrow, bears indeed the galling yoke,  
 Yet is he grieved, when he to such constraint  
 Submits his neck : but they who die may find  
 A bliss beyond the living ; for to live  
 Ignobly were the utmost pitch of shame.

CHOR. A great distinction, and among mankind  
 The most conspicuous, is to spring from sires  
 Renowned for virtue ; generous souls hence raise  
 To heights sublimer an ennobled name.

HEC. Thou, O my daughter, well indeed hast spoken ;  
 Yet these exalted sentiments of thine  
 To me will cause fresh grief ; but, if the son  
 Of Peleus must be gratified, and Greece  
 Avoid reproach, Ulysses, slay not her,  
 But me, conducting to Achilles' tomb,  
 Transpierce with unrelenting hand. I bore  
 Paris, whose shafts the son of Thetis slew.

ULY. Not thee for victim, O thou aged dame,  
 But her, Achilles' spectre hath demanded.

HEC. Yet slay me with my daughter ; so shall earth,  
 And the deceased who claims these hateful rites,  
 A twofold portion drink of human gore.

ULY. Enough in her of victims ; let no more  
 Be added : would to Heaven we were not bound  
 To offer up this one !

HEC. The dread behests  
 Of absolute necessity require,  
 That with my daughter I should die.

ULY. What mean'st thou ?  
 I know no lord to counteract my will.

HEC. Her, as the ivy clings around the oak,  
 Will I embrace.

ULY. Not if to wiser counsels  
 Thou yield just deference.

HEC. I will ne'er consent  
 My daughter to release.

ULY. Nor will I go,  
 And leave her here.

POLYX. Attend to me, my mother,  
 And, O thou offspring of Laertes, treat  
 The just emotions of parental wrath  
 With greater mildness. But, O hapless woman,  
 Contend not with our conquerors. Wouldst you tall  
 Upon the earth and wound your aged limbs,



Thrust from me forcibly, by youthful arms  
Torn with disgrace away? Provoke not wrongs  
Unseemly; O, my dearest mother, give  
That much-loved hand, and let me join my cheek  
To yours; for I no longer shall behold  
The radiant orb of yonder sun. Now take  
A last farewell, O you who gave me birth;  
I to the shades descend.

HEC. But I the light  
Am doomed to view, and still remain a slave.

POLYX. Unwedded, left of promised bridal joys.

HEC. Thou, O my daughter, claim'st the pitying tear:  
But I am a most miserable woman.

POLYX. There shall I sleep among the realms beneath,  
From you secluded.

HEC. What resource, alas!  
For me, the wretched Hecuba is left?

Where shall I finish this detested life?

POLYX. Born free, I die a slave.

HEC. I too, bereft  
Of all my children.

POLYX. What commands to Hector,  
Or to your aged husband, shall I bear?

HEC. Tell them I of all women am most wretched.

POLYX. Ye paps which sweetly nourished me——

HEC. Alas!

My child's untimely miserable fate.

POLYX. Farewell, my mother, and my dear Cassandra.

HEC. To others in that language speak; be theirs.  
The happiness thy mother cannot taste.

POLYX. And thou, my brother Polydore, who dwel'st  
Among the Thracians, famed for generous steeds——

HEC. If yet he live; but this I greatly doubt,

Because I am in all respects so wretched.

POLYX. He lives, and when the hour of death is come,  
Will close your eyes.

HEC. I'm prematurely dead  
While yet alive, bowed down to earth by woe.

POLYX. Now bear me hence, Ulysses, o'er my face  
Casting a veil: for ere I at the altar

Am slain, this heart is melted by the plaints

Of my dear mother, and my tears augment

Her sorrows. O thou radiant light; for still

Am I permitted to invoke thy name,

But can enjoy thee only till I meet

The lifted sword, and reach Achilles' tomb.

[*Exit* ULYSSES and POLYXENA.

HEC. I faint, my limbs are all unnerved; return,

My daughter, let me touch that hand once more,

Leave me not childless. O, my friends, I perish ;  
 Ah, would to Heaven I could see Spartan Helen,  
 In the same state, that sister to the sons  
 Of Jove, for by her beauteous eyes was Troy,  
 That prosperous city, with disgrace o'erthrown.

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

Ye breezes, who the ships convey,  
 That long becalmed at anchor lay,  
     Nor dared to quit the strand;  
 As the swift keel divides the wave,  
 Say whither am I borne a slave,  
 Ordained to tread the Doric land,  
 Or Phthia, where beset with reeds,  
 Apidanus, the sire of limpid rills,  
 Winding a-down the channelled hills,  
     Waters the fruitful meads?

## I. 2.

Or to that isle, with dashing oar  
 Impelled, shall I my woes deplore,  
     And on the sacred earth,  
 Where first the palm and laurel rose,  
 Memorials of Latona's throes,  
 Which to the twins divine gave birth,  
 Teach the harmonious strain to flow ;  
 With Delos' nymphs Diana's praise resound,  
 Her hair with golden fillet bound,  
     And never-erring bow?

## II. 1.

Or, pent in some Athenian tower,  
 Devoted to Minerva's power,  
     On the robe's tissued ground  
 While, shadowed by my needle, spread  
 Expressive forms, in vivid thread,  
 Picture the goddess whirling round  
 Her chariot with unrivalled speed ;  
 Or represent the Titan's impious crew,  
 Whom Jove's red lightnings overthrew,  
     Those monsters doomed to bleed?

## II. 2.

Alas ! my sons, a valiant band,  
 My fathers, and my native land,

Ye shared the general fate,  
 Sacked by the Greeks, Troy's bulwarks smoke,  
 But I, constrained to bear the yoke,  
 Shall soon behold some foreign state,  
 To ignominious bondage led ;  
 And leaving vanquished Asia Europe's slave,  
 Debarred an honourable grave,  
 Ascend the victor's bed.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. Where, O ye Phrygian damsels, shall I find  
 The wretched Hecuba, who erst was queen  
 Of Ilion ?

CHOR. Prostrate near you on the ground,  
 Wrapt in her mantle, there she lies.

TAL. Great Jove !  
 What shall I say ? that thou from Heaven look'st down  
 Upon mankind, or have they rashly formed  
 A vain opinion, deeming that the race  
 Of gods exist, though fortune governs all ?  
 Ha ! was not this the queen of wealthy Phrygia,  
 And was not she the happy Priam's wife ?  
 But her whole city by the hostile spear  
 Is now destroyed, while she lies aye, bowed down  
 By age, and childless, stretched upon the ground,  
 Defiles with dust her miserable head.  
 Old as I am, yet gladly would I die  
 Rather than sink into abhorred disgrace.  
 Arise, unhappy woman, O lift up  
 That feeble body, and that hoary head.

HEC. Away ! O suffer this decrepit frame  
 To rest. Why move me ! Whosoe'er thou art,  
 What mean'st thou ? why dost thou molest th' afflicted ?

TAL. Talthybius : me, the herald of the Greeks,  
 O woman, Agamemnon hath despatched  
 To fetch you.

HEC. Com'st thou, by the Greeks ordained,  
 My friend, to slay me also at the tomb ?  
 How welcome were such tidings ; let us go,  
 With speed conduct me thither.

TAL. To inter  
 Your daughter, I invite you ; both the sons  
 Of Atreus, and the assembled Grecian host,  
 Have sent me for that purpose.

HEC. Ah ! what say'st thou ?  
 Thou com'st not to inform me I must die,  
 But to unfold the most disastrous tidings.  
 Then art thou lost, my daughter, from the arms  
 Of thy fond mother torn ; of thee, my child

Am I bereft. But how did ye destroy her,  
Respectfully, or with the ruthless hand  
Of hostile rage? Speak, though it wound my soul.

TAL. A second time, in pity to your daughter,  
You make me weep; for now while I relate  
Her sufferings, tears bedew these swimming eyes,  
Such as I shed when at the tomb she perished.  
To view the sacrifice the Grecian host  
Were all assembled: taking by the hand  
Polyxena, on the sepulchral hillock  
Achilles' son then placed her: I drew near,  
Attended by the chosen youths of Greece,  
To hold the tender victim, and prevent  
Her struggles. But Achilles' son, uplifting  
With both his hands a cup of massive gold,  
Poured forth libations to his breathless sire;  
And gave a sign to me, through the whole camp  
Strict silence to proclaim. I in the midst  
Stood up and cried: "Be mute, ye Greeks, let none  
Presume to speak, observe a general silence."  
The troops obeyed, and through their crowded ranks  
Not e'en a breath was heard, while in these words  
The chief expressed his purpose: "Son of Peleus,  
My father, the propitiatory drops  
Of these libations which invite the dead  
Accept; O come and quaff the crimson blood  
Of this pure virgin, whom to thee all Greece  
And I devote; be thou benign, O grant us  
Securely to weigh anchor, to unbind  
Our halsers, and on all of us bestow  
A happy voyage to our native land  
From vanquished Troy." He ceased, and in his prayer  
Joined the whole army, when the chief unsheathed  
His golden-hilted sword, and gave a sign  
To chosen youths of Greece to hold the virgin,  
Which she perceived, and in these words addressed  
The warriors: "O ye Argives, who laid waste  
My city, willingly I die, let no man  
Confine these arms, I with undaunted breast  
Will meet the stroke. I by the gods conjure you  
Release, and slay me as my rank demands  
Like one born free; for I from mighty kings  
Descend, and in the shades beneath should blush  
To be accounted an ignoble slave."  
Through all the host ran murmurs of assent,  
And royal Agamemnon bade the youths  
Release the virgin; they their monarch's voice,  
Soon as they heard, obeyed; our lord's behests  
The princess too revering, from her shoulder

Down to her waist rent off the purple robe,  
 Displayed her bosom like some statue formed  
 In exquisite proportion, and to earth  
 Bending her knee, in these affecting words  
 Expressed herself: "If at my breast thou aim  
 The wound, strike here; if at my neck, that neck  
 Is ready bared." Half willing, and half loth,  
 Through pity for the maid, he with keen steel  
 Severed the arteries; streams of blood gashed forth:  
 Yet even thus, though at her latest gasp,  
 She showed a strong solicitude to fall  
 With decency, while stood the gazing host  
 Around her: soon as through the ghastly wound  
 Her soul had issued, every Greek was busied  
 In various labours; o'er the corse some strewed  
 The verdant foliage, others reared a pyre  
 With trunks of fir: but he who nothing brought,  
 From him who with funereal ornament  
 Was laden, heard these taunts: "O slothful wretch,  
 Bear'st thou no robe, no garland, hast thou nought  
 To give in honour of this generous maid?"  
 Such their encomiums on thy breathless daughter.  
 You, of all women, who in such a child  
 Were happiest, now most wretched I behold.

CHOR. Fate, the behests of the immortal gods  
 Accomplishing, with tenfold weight hath caused  
 This dreadful curse to fall on Priam's house,  
 And on our city.

HEC. 'Midst unnumbered ills  
 I know not, O my daughter, whither first  
 To turn my eyes, for if on one I touch,  
 Another hinders me, and I again,  
 By a long train of woes succeeding woes,  
 To some fresh object am from thence called off;  
 Nor can I from my tortured soul efface  
 The grief thy fate occasions; yet the tale  
 Of thy exalted courage checks my groans,  
 Which else had been immoderate. No just cause  
 Have we for wonder, if the barren land  
 Cheered by Heaven's influence, with benignant suns  
 Yields plenteous harvests, while a richer soil  
 Deprived of every necessary aid  
 Bears weeds alone. But 'midst the human race  
 The wicked man is uniformly wicked,  
 The good still virtuous, nor doth evil fortune  
 Corrupt his soul; the same unsullied worth  
 He still retains. Is this great difference owing  
 To birth, or education? We are taught  
 What virtue is, by being nurtured well,

And he who thoroughly hath learnt this lesson,  
 Guided by the unerring rule of right,  
 Can thence discern what's base.—My soul in vain  
 Hath hazarded these incoherent thoughts.  
 But, O Talthybius, to the Greeks repair,  
 And strict injunctions give, that no man touch  
 My daughter's corse, but let the gazing crowd  
 Be driven away. For in a numerous host  
 Its multitudes break loose from all restraints,  
 The outrages of mariners exceed  
 Devouring flame, and whosoe'er abstains  
 From mischief, by his comrades is despised.  
 But, O my aged servant, take and dip  
 That urn in ocean's waves, and hither bring,  
 Filled with its water, that the last sad rites  
 To my departed daughter I may pay,  
 And lave the corse of that unwedded bride,  
 Of that affianced virgin : but alas !  
 Whence with such costly gifts as she deserves,  
 Her tomb can I adorn ? My present state  
 Affords them not, but what it doth afford  
 Will I bestow, and from the captive dames  
 Appointed to attend me, who reside  
 Within these tents, some ornaments collect,  
 If, unobserved by their new masters, aught  
 They have secreted. O ye splendid domes,  
 Ye palaces once happy, which contained  
 All that was rich and fair ; O Priam thou  
 The sire, and I who was the aged mother  
 Of an illustrious race, how are we dwindled  
 To nothing, stripped of all our ancient pride !  
 Yet do we glory, some in mansions stored  
 With gold abundant, others when distinguished  
 Among the citizens by sounding titles.  
 Vain are the schemes which with incessant care  
 We frame, and all our boastful words are vain.  
 The happiest man is he who, by no ill  
 O'ertaken, passes through life's fleeting day.

[*Exit* HECUBA.]

#### CHORUS.

#### ODE.

#### 1.

By Heaven was my devoted head  
 Menaced with impending ill,  
 What time the pines, whose branches spread  
 Their tutelary shade o'er Ida's hill,

Were laid by Phrygian Paris low,  
That his adventurous bark might stem the tide,  
From Sparta's coast to waft the fairest bride  
On whom the solar beams their golden radiance throw.

II.

Surrounding labours were at hand  
Leagued with the behests of fate ;  
Then did such madness seize the land,  
As called down vengeance from a foreign state.  
The royal swain with dazzled eyes  
Gave that decree, the source of all our woes,  
When from three rival goddesses he chose  
Bright Venus, and pronounced that she deserved the prize.

III.

The spear and death hence raged around,  
Hence were my mansions levelled with the ground ;  
Staining with tears Eurotas' tide,  
Too deeply grieved to share the victor's pride,  
The Spartan virgin too in vain  
Bewails her favoured youth untimely slain,  
While, sprinkling ashes o'er their vest  
And hoary head, the matrons bend  
O'er their sons' urns ; their groans to Heaven ascend,  
They tear their cheeks, and beat their miserable breast.

ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

ATT. Where is the wretched Hecuba, my friends,  
Who in her woes surpasses all, or male,  
Or of the female race ? her none can rob  
Of her just claim, pre-eminence in grief.

CHOR. With the harsh sounds of that ill-boding tongue,  
O wretch, what mean'st thou ? wilt thou never cease  
To be th' unwelcome herald of affliction ?

ATT. Most grievous are the tidings which I bring  
To Hecuba, nor easy were the task  
In words auspicious to make known to mortals  
Such dire calamities.

CHOR. From her apartment  
She seasonably comes forth to give thee audience.

HECUBA, ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

ATT. O most unfortunate, whose woes exceed  
All that the power of language can express,  
My queen, you perish, doomed no more to view  
The blessed light ; of children, husband, city,  
Bereft and ruined.

HEC. Nothing hast thou told

But what I knew, thou only com'st t' insult me :  
 Yet wherefore dost thou bring to me this corse  
 Of my Polyxena, o'er whom 'twas said  
 The Grecian host with pious zeal all vied  
 To heap a tomb?

ATT. She knows not, but laments  
 For the deceased Polyxena alone,  
 And to her recent woes is yet a stranger.

HEC. Ah, bring'st thou the inspired prophetic head,  
 And the dishevelled tresses of Cassandra?

ATT. You speak of one yet living, but bewail not  
 This the deceased : survey the naked corse  
 Of him whose death to you will seem most strange  
 And most unlooked for.

HEC. Ha, I see my son,  
 My dearest Polydore, whom he of Thrace  
 Beneath his roof protected. I am ruined ;  
 Now utterly I perish. O my son,  
 For thee, for thee I wake the frantic dirge,  
 By that malignant demon which assumed  
 Thy voice, thy semblance, recently apprized  
 Of this calamity.

ATT. O wretched mother,  
 Know you then what was your son's fate?

HEC. A sight  
 Incredible and new to me is that  
 Which I behold : for from my former woes  
 Spring woes in long succession, and the day  
 When I shall cease to weep, shall cease to groan,  
 Will never come.

CHOR. The woes which we endure  
 Alas ! are dreadful.

HEC. O my son, thou son  
 Of an ill fated mother, by what death  
 Didst thou expire ? through what disastrous cause  
 Here liest thou prostrate ? ah, what bloody hand——

ATT. I know not : on the shore his corse I found.

HEC. Cast up by the impetuous waves, or pierced  
 With murderous spear ?

ATT. The surges of the deep  
 Had thrown it on the sand.

HEC. Alas ! too well  
 I comprehend the meaning of the dream  
 Which to these eyes appeared : the spectre borne  
 On sable pinions no illusion proved,  
 When, O my son, thee, thee it represented  
 No longer dwelling in the realms of light.

CHOR. Instructed by that vision, canst thou name  
 The murderer ?



HEC. 'Twas my friend, the Thracian king,  
With whom in secrecy his aged sire  
Had placed him.

CHOR. Ha ! what mean'st thou ? to possess  
That gold by slaying him ?

HEC. O, 'twas a deed  
Unutterable, a deed without a name,  
Surpassing all astonishment, unholy,  
And not to be endured. Where now the laws  
Of hospitality ? Accursed man,  
How cruelly hast thou with reeking sword  
Transpierced this unresisting boy, nor heard  
The gentle voice of pity !

CHOR. Hapless queen,  
How hath some demon, thy malignant foe,  
Rendered thee of all mortals the most wretched :  
But I behold great Agamemnon come,  
And therefore, O my friends, let us be silent.

AGAMEMNON, HECUBA, CHORUS.

AGA. Whence this delay ? why go you not t' inter,  
O Hecuba, your daughter, whom Talthybius  
Directed that no Greek might be allowed  
To touch ? We therefore have with your request  
Complied, nor moved the corse. But you remain  
Inactive, which I wonder at, and come  
To fetch you, for each previous solemn rite  
That best might please, if aught such rites can please,  
Have we performed. But ah, what Trojan youth  
Do I behold lie breathless in the tent ?  
For that he was no Greek, the garb informs me  
In which he's clad.

HEC. Thou wretch, for of myself  
I speak, when thee, O Hecuba, I name ;  
What shall I do, at Agamemnon's knees  
Fall prostrate, or in silence bear my woes ?

AGA. Why weep, with face averted, yet refuse  
T' inform me what hath happened ? who is he ?

HEC. But from his knees, if, deeming me a slave  
And enemy, the monarch should repel me,  
This would but make my sorrows yet more poignant.

AGA. I am no seer, nor can I uninformed  
Trace out the secret purpose of your soul.

HEC. Am I mistaken then, while I suppose  
A foe in him who doth not mean me ill ?

AGA. If 'tis your wish I should not be apprized,  
We both are of one mind ; you will not speak,  
And I as little am disposed to hear.

HEC. Without his aid no vengeance for my child

Can I obtain: yet why deliberate thus?  
 Prosper or fail I must take courage now.  
 O royal Agamemnon, by those knees  
 A suppliant I conjure you, by that beard,  
 And that right hand, victorious o'er your foes.

AGA. What do you wish for? To obtain your freedom?  
 This were not difficult.

HEC. No, give me vengeance  
 On yonder guilty wretch, and I am willing  
 To linger out the remnant of my life  
 In servitude.

AGA. Then why implore our aid?

HEC. For reasons you suspect not. Do you see  
 That breathless corse o'er which my tears I shed?

AGA. The corse I see; but cannot comprehend  
 What follows next.

HEC. Him erst I bore and nurtured.

AGA. Is the deceased, O miserable dame,  
 One of your children?

HEC. Not of those who fell  
 Beneath Troy's walls.

AGA. What! had you other sons?

HEC. Yes, him you see, born in an evil hour.

AGA. But where was he when Ilion was destroyed?

HEC. His father, apprehensive of his death,  
 Conveyed him thence.

AGA. From all the other children  
 Which then he had, where placed he this apart?

HEC. In this same region where his corse was found.

AGA. With Polymestor, sovereign of the land?

HEC. He, to preserve that execrable gold,  
 Was hither sent.

AGA. But, by what ruthless hand,  
 And how, was he de-patched?

HEC. By whom beside?  
 The murderer was his friend, the Thracian king.

AGA. Was he thus eager? O abandoned wretch,  
 To seize the gold!

HEC. E'en thus; soon as he knew  
 Troy was o'erthrown.

AGA. But where did you discover  
 The body, or who brought it?

HEC. On the shore  
 This servant found it.

AGA. Or in quest of him  
 Or other task then busied?

HEC. To fetch water  
 To lave Polyxena's remains she went.

AGA. When he had slain him, it appears, his friend  
Did cast him forth.

HEC. He to the waves consigned  
The stripling's mangled corse.

AGA. O wretched woman,  
Surrounded by immeasurable woes.

HEC. I am undone ; no farther ill remains  
For me t' experience.

AGA. Ah ! what woman e'er  
Was born to such calamities ?

HEC. Not one  
Exists, whose sorrows equal mine, unless  
You of Calamity herself would speak.  
Yet hear the motive why I clasp your knees.  
If I appear to merit what I suffer,  
I must be patient ; but if not, avenge  
My wrongs upon the man who 'gainst his guest  
Such treachery could commit, who, nor the gods  
Of Erebus beneath, nor those who rule  
In Heaven above regarding, this vile deed,  
Did perpetrate, e'en he with whom I oft  
Partook the feast, on whom I showered each bounty,  
Esteeming him the first of all my friends ;  
Yet, when at Ilion's palace with respect  
He had been treated, a deliberate scheme  
Of murder forming, he destroyed my sor,  
On whom he deigned not to bestow a tomb,  
But threw his corse into the briny deep.  
Though I indeed am feeble, and a slave,  
Yet mighty are the gods, and by their law  
The world is ruled : for by that law we learn  
That there are gods, and can mark out the bounds  
Of justice and injustice ; if such law  
To you transmitted, be infringed, if they  
Who kill their guests, or dare with impious hand  
To violate the altars of the gods,  
Unpunished 'scape, no equity is left  
Among mankind. Deeming such base connivance  
Unworthy of yourself, revere my woes,  
Have pity on me, like a painter take  
Your stand to view me, and observe the number  
Of my afflictions ; once was I a queen,  
But now am I a slave ; in many a son  
I once was rich, but now am I both old  
And of my children reft, without a city,  
Forlorn, and of all mortals the most wretched.  
But whither would you go ? With you I seem  
To have no interest. Miserable me !

Why do we mortals by assiduous toil,  
 And such a painful search as their importance  
 Makes requisite, all other arts attain,  
 Yet not enough intent on the due knowledge  
 Of that sole empress of the human soul  
 Persuasion, no rewards bestow on those  
 Who teach us by insinuating words  
 How to procure our wishes? who can trust  
 Hereafter in prosperity? That band  
 Of my heroic sons is now no more,  
 Myself a captive, am led forth to tasks  
 Unseemly, and e'en now these eyes behold  
 The air obscured by Ilion's rising smoke.  
 It might be vain perhaps, were I to found  
 A claim to your assistance on your love :  
 Yet must I speak : my daughter, who in Troy  
 Was called Cassandra, the prophetic dame,  
 Partakes your bed ; and how those rapturous nights  
 Will you acknowledge, or to her how show  
 Your gratitude for all the fond embraces  
 Which she bestows, O king, or in her stead  
 To me her mother? In the soul of man  
 Th' endearments of the night, by darkness veiled,  
 Create the strongest interest. To my tale  
 Now listen : do you see that breathless corse?  
 Each act of kindness which to him is shown,  
 Upon a kinsman of the dame you love  
 Will be conferred. But, in one point my speech  
 Is yet deficient. By the wondrous arts  
 Of Dædalus, or some benignant god,  
 Could I give voice to each arm, hand, and hair,  
 And each extremest joint, they round your knees  
 Should cling together, and together weep,  
 At once combining with a thousand tongues.  
 O monarch, O thou light of Greece, comply,  
 And stretch forth that avenging arm to aid  
 An aged woman, though she be a thing  
 Of nought, O succour : for the good man's duty  
 Is to obey the dread behests of justice,  
 And ever punish those who act amiss.

CHOR. 'Tis wonderful, indeed, how all events  
 Happen to mortals, and the dread behests  
 Of fate, uncircumscribed by human laws,  
 Constrain us to form amities with those  
 To whom the most inveterate hate we bore,  
 And into foes convert our former friends.

AGA. To you, O Hecuba, your son, your fortunes,  
 And your entreaties, is my pity due.  
 I in obedience to the gods and justice

Wish to avenge you on this impious friend,  
 Could I appear your interests to espouse,  
 Without the troops suspecting that I slay  
 The Thracian monarch for Cassandra's sake :  
 My terrors hence arise ; the host esteem  
 Him our ally, and the deceased a foe :  
 What though you held him dear, his fate, the loss  
 Of you alone, affects not the whole camp.  
 Reflect too, that you find me well disposed  
 To share your toils, and in your cause exert  
 My utmost vigour ; but, what makes me slow,  
 Is a well-grounded fear of blame from Greece.

HEC. Alas ! there's no man free : for some are slaves  
 To gold, to fortune others, and the rest,  
 The multitude or written laws restrain  
 From acting as their better judgment dictates.  
 But since you are alarmed, and to the rabble  
 Yield an implicit deference, from that fear  
 I will release you ; only to my schemes  
 Be privy, if some mischief I contrive  
 Against the murderer of my son : but take  
 No active part. If, when the Thracian suffers,  
 As he shall suffer, 'mongst the Greeks a tumult  
 Break forth, or they attempt to succour him,  
 Restrain them, without seeming to befriend  
 My interests. As for what remains, rely  
 On me, and I will manage all things well.

AGA. How then ? what mean you ? With that aged hand  
 To wield a sword, and take away the life  
 Of that barbarian, or by drugs endued  
 With magic power ? the help you need, what arts  
 Can furnish ? what strong arm have you to fight  
 Your battles ? whence will you procure allies ?

HEC. These tents conceal a group of Trojan dances.

AGA. Mean you those captives whom the Greeks have  
 seized.

HEC. With them I on the murderer will inflict  
 Due punishment.

AGA. How can the female sex  
 O'er men obtain a conquest ?

HEC. Numbers strike  
 A foe with terror, and the wiles of women  
 Are hard to be withstood.

AGA. They may strike terror,  
 But in their courage I no trust can place.

HEC. What ? did not women slay *Egyptus*' sons,  
 And in their rage exterminate each male  
 From *Lemnos* ? But leave me to find out means  
 How to effect my purpose. Through the camp

In safety this my faithful servant send ;  
 And thou, when to my Thracian friend thou com'st,  
 Say, "Hecuba, erst Queen of Troy, invites  
 Thee and thy children, on thy own account,  
 No less than hers, because she to thy sons  
 And thee the self-same message must deliver."  
 The newly slain Polyxena's interment  
 Defer, O Agamemnon ; in one flame  
 That when their kindred corpses are consumed ;  
 The brother with the sister, who demand  
 A twofold portion of their mother's grief  
 Together may be buried in one grave.

AGA. These rites shall be performed, which could the  
 troops

Set sail, I needs must have denied : but now,  
 Since Neptune sends not an auspicious breeze,  
 Expecting a more seasonable voyage,  
 Here must we wait. But may success attend you ;  
 For 'tis the common interest of mankind,  
 Of every individual, every state,  
 That he who hath transgressed should suffer ill,  
 And fortune crown the efforts of the virtuous.

[*Exit* AGAMEMNON.]

#### CHORUS.

##### I. 1.

No more, O Troy, thy dreaded name  
 Conspicuous in the lists of fame,  
 'Midst fortresses impregnable shall stand,  
 In such thick clouds an armed host  
 Pours terrors from the Grecian coast,  
 And wastes thy vanquished land :  
 Shorn from thy rampired brow the crown  
 Of turrets fell ; thy palaces o'erspread  
 With smoke lie waste, no more I tread  
 Thy wonted streets, my native town.

##### I. 2.

I perished at the midnight hour,  
 When, aided by the banquet's power,  
 Sleep o'er my eyes his earliest influence shed ;  
 Retiring from the choral song,  
 The sacrifice and festive throng,  
 Stretched on the downy bed  
 The bridegroom indolently lay,  
 His massive spear suspended on the beam,  
 No more he saw the helmets gleam,  
 Or nautic troops in dread array.

## II. 1.

While me the golden mirror's aid,  
 My flowing tresses taught to braid  
 In graceful ringlets with a fillet bound,  
 Just as I cast my robe aside,  
 And sought the couch ; extending wide  
 Through every street this sound  
 Was heard ; " O when, ye sons of Greece,  
 This nest of robbers levelled with the plain,  
 Will ye behold your homes again ?  
 When shall these tedious labours cease ? "

## II. 2.

Then from my couch up starting, drest  
 Like Spartan nymph in zoneless vest,  
 At Dian's shrine an ineffectual prayer  
 Did I address ; for hither led,  
 First having viewed my husband dead,  
 Full oft I in despair,  
 As the proud vessel sailed from land,  
 Looked back, and saw my native walls laid low,  
 Then fainting with excess of woe  
 At length lost sight of Ilion's strand.

## III.

Helen that sister to the sons of Jove,  
 And Paris Ida's swain,  
 With my curses still pursuing,  
 For to them I owe my ruin,  
 Me they from my country drove,  
 Never to return again,  
 By that detested spousal rite  
 On which Hymen never smiled.  
 No, 'twas some demon who with lewd delight  
 Their frantic souls beguiled :  
 Her may ocean's waves no more  
 Waft to her paternal shore.

## POLYMISTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POLYM. For thee, O Priam, my unhappy friend,  
 And you, my dearest Hecuba, I weep.  
 Beholding your distress, your city taken,  
 Your daughter newly slain : alas ! there's nought  
 To be relied on ; fame is insecure,  
 Nor can the prosperous their enjoyments guard  
 Against a change of Fortune, for the gods  
 Backward and forward turn her wavering wheel,  
 And introduce confusion in the world,  
 That we, because we know not will happen,

May worship them. But of what use are plaints  
Which have no virtue to remove our woes ?  
If you my absence censure, be appeased,  
For in the midst of Thracia's wide domains  
I from these coasts was distant at the time  
Of your arrival: soon as I returned,  
When from the palace I was issuing forth,  
This your attendant met me, and delivered  
The message, hearing which, I hither came.

HEC. O Polymestor, wretched as I am,  
I blush to see thy face ; because thou erst  
In happier days didst know me, I with shame  
Appear before thee in my present fortunes.  
Nor can I look at thee with steadfast eyes :  
But this thou wilt not deem to be a mark  
Of enmity : the cause of such behaviour  
Is only custom, which forbids our sex  
To gaze on men.

POLYM. No wonder you thus act  
Under such circumstances. But what need  
Have you of me, and wherefore did you send  
To fetch me from the palace ?

HEC. I in private  
A secret of importance would disclose  
To thee and to thy children. From these tents  
Give orders for thy followers to depart.

POLYM. [*to his attendants, who retire.*]  
Withdraw ; this solitary spot is safe.  
For you and the confederate Grecian host  
Are all attached to me. But 'tis incumbent  
On you t' inform me what my prosperous fortunes  
Can yield to succour my unhappy friends !  
For this is what I wish to do.

HEC. Say first,  
If he, my son, whom this maternal hand  
And his fond father in thy mansions placed,  
My Polydore, yet live. I'll then pursue  
My questions.

POLYM. Yes, in him you still are blest.

HEC. How kind, how worthy of thyself that speech,  
My dearest friend !

POLYM. What farther would you know ?

HEC. If haply yet the youth remember aught  
Of me his mother.

POLYM. Much he wished to come  
And visit you in private.

HEC. Is the gold  
He brought from Troy preserved ?



- POLYM. I keep it safe  
In my own palace.
- HEC. Keep it if thou wilt :  
But covet not the treasures of thy friends.
- POLYM. I do not covet them ; my utmost wish  
Is to enjoy, O woman, what I have.
- HEC. Know'st thou then, what to thee and to thy sons  
I want to say ?
- POLYM. I know not ; till in words  
Your thoughts are signified.
- HEC. Bestow such love  
On Polydore as thou receiv'st from me.
- POLYM. What is it that to me and to my children  
You would disclose ?
- HEC. The spot, where deep in earth,  
The ancient treasures of all Priam's house  
Lie buried.
- POLYM. Is this secret what you wish  
Should to your son be mentioned ?
- HEC. Yes, by thee,  
Because thou art a virtuous man !
- POLYM. But wherefore  
Did you require these children should be present ?
- HEC. For them to know the secret, if thou die,  
Will be of great advantage.
- POLYM. You have spoken  
Well and discreetly.
- HEC. Know'st thou where at Troy  
Minerva's temple stands ?
- POLYM. Is the gold there ?
- But by what mark shall I the spot distinguish ?
- HEC. Above the surface rises a black stone.
- POLYM. Will you describe the place yet more minutely ?
- HEC. The gold I in thy custody would place,  
Which I from Ilion hither bring.
- POLYM. Where is it ?
- Concealed beneath your garment ?
- HEC. 'Midst a heap  
Of spoils laid up within yon tents.
- POLYM. Where mean you ?
- These are the Grecian mariners' abode.
- HEC. In separate dwellings have they placed the captives ?
- POLYM. But how can we rely upon the faith  
Of those within ? doth no man thither come ?
- HEC. There's not a Greek within ; we are alone ;  
But enter thou these doors : for now the host,  
Impatient to weigh anchor, would return  
From Ilion to their homes. Thou with thy children.

T' accomplish all the dread behests of fate,  
Shalt thither go where thou hast lodged my son.

[*Exeunt* HECUBA and POLYMESTOR.

CHOR. Thou hast not yet received the blow,  
But justice sure will lay thee low.  
Like him who headlong from on high  
Falls where no friendly haven's nigh,  
Into the ocean's stormy wave,  
Here shalt thou find a certain grave:  
For twofold ruin doth impend  
O'er him who human laws pursue,  
And righteous gods indignant view :  
'Thee shall the hope of gain mislead,  
Which prompts thee to advance with speed,  
And Pluto's loathed abode descend :  
Soon shalt thou press th' ensanguined strand,  
Slain by a woman's feeble hand.

POLYM. [*within.*] Ah me, the light that visited these eyes  
Is darkened.

SEMICHOR. Heard ye, O my friends, the shriek  
Of yonder Thracian ?

POLYM. [*within.*] Yet again, alas,  
My children's foul and execrable murder !

SEMICHOR. My friends, some recent mischief hath within  
Been perpetrated.

POLYM. [*within.*] Though your feet are swift,  
Ye shall not 'scape, for through the walls I'll burst  
My passage.

SEMICHOR. With a forceful hand, behold  
He brandishes the javelin. Shall we rush  
To seize him ? This important crisis bids us  
Assist our queen and Phrygia's valiant dames.

HEC. Now do thy worst, and from their hinges rend  
Yon massive gates ; no more canst thou impart  
To those lost eyes their visual orbs, nor see  
Thy sons, whom I have slain, to life restored.

#### HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Hast thou, my honoured mistress, caught the Thracian,  
Over this treacherous friend hast thou prevailed,  
And all thy threats accomplished ?

HEC. Ye shall see him  
Before the tent, without delay, deprived  
Of sight, advancing with unsteady foot,  
And the two breathless corpses of his sons,  
Whom I, assisted by the noblest matrons  
Of Troy, have slain. Th' atonement he hath paid  
To my revenge, is just. But now behold

He issues forth : I will retire and shun  
The Thracian chief's unconquerable rage.

POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POLYM. Ah, whither am I going? wretched me!  
Where am I? what supports me? With these hands  
Groping my way like some four-footed beast,  
How shall I turn me, to the right or left,  
That I those murderous Phrygian dames may seize  
Who have destroyed me? Impious and accurst  
Daughters of Ilion, in what dark recess  
Do they escape me? Would to heaven, O Sun,  
Thou to these bleeding eyeballs could'st afford  
A cure, that thou my blindness could'st remove.  
But hush, I hear those women's cautious tread.  
How shall I leap upon them? with their flesh  
How shall I glut my rage, and for a feast  
To hungry tigers cast their mangled bones,  
In just requital of the horrid wrongs,  
Which I from them, ah wretched me, have suffered?  
But whither, by what impulse am I borne,  
Leaving the corpses of my sons exposed  
To hellish Bacchanalians, as they lie  
Torn by the dogs, and on the mountain's ridge  
Cast forth unburied! Where shall I stand still?  
Or whither shall I go? Like some proud bark  
Towed into harbour, which contracts its sails;  
I to that fatal chamber which contains  
The corpses of my murdered sons rush onward  
With speed involuntary.

CHOR.

Hapless man,

How art thou visited by woes too grievous  
To be endured! but by dread Jove thy foe,  
On him whose deeds are base, it is ordained  
That the severest punishments await.

POLYM. Rouse, O ye Thracians, armed with ponderous  
spears,  
Arrayed in mail, for generous steeds renowned,  
A hardy race, whom Mars himself inspires.  
To you, O Grecian troops, and both the sons  
Of Atreus, I with clamorous voice appeal:  
Come hither, I implore you by the gods.  
Do any of you hear me? Is there none  
Who will assist? Why loiter ye? Those women,  
Those captives have destroyed me. Horrid wrongs  
Have I endured; ah me, the foul reproach!  
But whither shall I turn, or whither go?  
Through the ærial regions shall I wing  
My swift career to that sublime abode

Where Sirius or Orion from his eyes  
Darts radiant flames? or, to perdition doomed,  
Shall I descend to Pluto's sable flood?

CHOR. He merits pardon, whosoe'er assailed  
By ills too grievous to be borne, shakes off  
The loathed encumbrance of a wretched life.

AGAMEMNON, POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

AGA. Hearing thy shrieks I came. For Echo, child  
Of craggy mountains, in no gentle note  
Wafted those sounds tumultuous through the host.  
Had we not known that by the Grecian spear  
The towers of vanquished Phrygia are o'erthrown,  
Such uproar would have caused no small alarm.

POLYM. My dearest friend, soon as I heard your voice,  
I instantly perceived 'twas Agamemnon.  
See you my sufferings?

AGA. Wretched Polymestor!  
Who hath destroyed thee? who bereaved of sight  
Thy bleeding orbs, and those thy children slew?  
Whoe'er the author of such deeds, his rage  
Was dreadful sure 'gainst thee and 'gainst thy sons.

POLYM. With the assistance of those captive dames,  
Me Hecuba hath murdered, more than murdered.

AGA. What mean'st thou? Are you guilty of the crime  
With which he charges you? and have you dared  
To perpetrate an action thus audacious?

POLYM. Ah me! what said you? Is she near at hand?  
Inform me where to find, that I may seize her,  
And scatter wide to all the fowls of heaven  
Her mangled corse.

AGA. Ha! what is thy design?

POLYM. Allow me, I conjure you by the gods,  
To grasp her with this frantic arm.

AGA. Desist,  
And casting forth all rancour from thy heart,  
Now plead thy cause; that, hearing both apart,  
I with unbiassed justice may decide,  
If thou these sufferings merit'st.

POLYM. I will speak.  
There was one Polydore, the youngest son  
Of those whom Hecuba to Priam bore;  
Him erst removing from the Phrygian realm,  
His sire to me consigned, that in my palace  
He might be nurtured, when that hoary king  
The fall of Troy suspected: him I slew:  
But hear my motives for the deed, to prove  
How justly and how prudently I acted.

Your enemy, that boy, if he survived  
The ruin of his country, might, I feared,  
Collect the scattered citizens of Troy,  
And there again reside. I also feared,  
That when the Greeks knew one of Priam's line  
Was living, with a second fleet invading  
The shores of Phrygia, they again might drain  
Of their inhabitants our Thracian fields,  
Involving us, their neighbours, in the vengeance  
They on their foes at Ilion wreak. To us  
Already hath such neighbourhood, O king,  
Proved baneful. But, apprized of her son's fate,  
Hecuba drew me hither, on pretence  
She would inform me where in massive gold  
The hidden treasures of old Priam's race  
Beneath Troy's ruins were secured. Alone,  
She with my children brought me to this tent,  
That none beside might know. With bended knee,  
While on a couch I sat, some on my left,  
And others on my right, as with a friend,  
Full many of the Trojan damsels took  
Their places, holding up against the sun  
My robe, the woof of an Edonian loom:  
Some feigned to admire it, others viewed my spear,  
And stripped me of them both. From hand to hand  
The matrons, seeming to caress my children,  
Removed them far from their unhappy sire:  
And after their fond speeches, in an instant,  
(Could you believe it?) snatching up the swords,  
Which they beneath their garments had conceal'd,  
They stabbed my sons, whom while I strove to aid,  
In hostile guise their comrades held my arms  
And feet: if I looked up, they by the hair  
Confined me; if I moved my hands, my struggles  
Proved ineffectual, through the numerous band  
Of women who assailed me, and to close  
The scene of my calamity, accomplished  
A deed with more than common horror fraught,  
For they tore out my bleeding eyes, and fled.  
But, like a tiger starting up, I chased  
These ruthless fiends, and with a hunter's speed  
Each wall examined, dashing to the ground,  
And breaking what I seized. These cruel wrongs,  
While I your interests study to maintain,  
O Agamemnon, and despatch your foe,  
Have I endured. To spare a long harangue,  
The whole of what 'gainst woman hath been said  
By those of ancient times, is saying now,  
Or shall be said hereafter, in few words

Will I comprise ; nor ocean's waves, nor earth,  
Nurture so vile a race, as he who most  
Hath with the sex conversed, but knows too well.

CHOR. Curb that audacious virulence of speech,  
Nor, by thy woes embittered, thus revile  
All womankind ; the number of our sex  
Is great, and some there are, whom as a mark  
To envy, their distinguished worth holds forth,  
Though some are justly numbered with the wicked.

HEC. O Agamemnon, never ought the tongue  
To have a greater influence o'er mankind  
Than actions ; but whoever hath done well,  
Ought to speak well ; and he, whose deeds are base,  
To use unseemly language, nor find means  
By specious words to colour o'er injustice.  
Full wise indeed are they to whom such art  
Is most familiar : but to stand the test  
Of time not wise enough ; for they all perish,  
Not one of them e'er 'scapes. These previous thoughts  
To you, O mighty king, have I addressed.  
But now to him I turn, and will refute  
The fallacies he uttered. What pretence  
Hast thou for saying, that to free the Greeks  
From such a second war, and for the sake  
Of Agamemnon, thou didst slay my son ?  
For first, O villain, the barbarian race  
With Greece, nor will, nor ever can be friends.  
What interest roused thy zeal ? Didst thou expect  
To form a nuptial union ? Wert thou moved  
By kindred ties, or any secret cause ?  
Greece with a fleet forsooth would have returned  
To lay thy country waste. Who, canst thou think,  
Will credit such assertions ? If the truth  
Thou wilt confess, gold and thy thirst of gain  
Were my son's murderers. Why, when Troy yet flourished,  
Why, when the city was on every side  
Fenced by strong bulwarks, why, when Priam lived,  
And Hector wielded a victorious spear,  
Didst thou not, if thou hadst designed to act  
In Agamemnon's favour, at the time  
When thou didst nurture my unhappy son,  
And in thy palace shelter, either slay,  
Or to the Greeks surrender up the youth  
A living prisoner ? But when Ilion's light  
Was utterly extinguished, when the smoke  
Declared the city subject to our foes,  
The stranger thou didst murder, at thy hearth  
Who sought protection. To confirm thy guilt,  
Now hear this farther charge : if thou to Greece

Hadst been a friend indeed, thou should'st have given  
 The gold thou say'st thou keep'st, not for thine own,  
 But Agamemnon's sake, among the troops  
 Who suffer want, and from their native land  
 Have for a tedious season been detained.  
 But thou from those rapacious hands e'en now  
 Canst not endure to part with it, but hoard'st it  
 Still buried in thy coffers: as became thee.  
 Hadst thou trained up my son, hadst thou to him  
 Been a protector, great is the renown  
 Thou would'st have gained; for in distress the good  
 Are steadfast; but our prosperous fortunes swarm  
 With friends unbidden. Hadst thou been in want,  
 And Polydore abounded, a sure treasure  
 To thee would he have proved: but now no longer  
 In him hast thou a friend; thou of thy gold  
 Hast lost th' enjoyment, thou thy sons hast lost,  
 And art thyself thus wretched. But to you,  
 O Agamemnon, now again I speak:  
 If you assist him, you will seem corrupt;  
 For you will benefit a man devoid  
 Of honour, justice, piety, or truth;  
 It might be said that you delight in evil;  
 But, I presume not to reproach my lords.

CHOR. How doth a virtuous cause inspire the tongue  
 With virtuous language!

AGA. On a stranger's woes  
 Reluctant I pronounce, but am constrained;  
 For shame attends the man who takes in hand  
 Some great affair, and leaves it undecided.  
 Know then, to me thou seem'st not to have slain  
 Thy guest through an attachment to my cause,  
 Nor yet to that of Greece, but that his gold  
 Thou might'st retain: though in this wretched state  
 Thou speak to serve thy interests. Among you  
 Perhaps the murder of your guests seems light;  
 We Greeks esteem it base. If I acquit thee  
 How shall I 'scape reproach? Indeed I cannot:  
 Since thou hast dared to perpetrate the crime,  
 Endure the consequence.

POLYM. Too plain it seems,  
 Ah me! that, vanquished by a female slave,  
 Here shall I perish by ignoble hands.

HEC. Is not this just for the atrocious deed  
 Which thou hast wrought?

POLYM. My children, wretched me!  
 And these quenched orbs.

HEC. Griev'st thou, yet think'st thou not  
 That I lament my son?

POLYM. Malignant woman,  
Do you rejoice in taunting my distress?

HEC. In such revenge have not I cause for joy?

POLYM. Yet not so hastily, when ocean's wave——

HEC. Shall in a bark convey me to the shores  
Of Greece?

POLYM. Shall whelm you in its vast abyss  
Fall'n from the shrouds.

HEC. Raised thither by what impulse?

POLYM. Up the tall mast you with swift foot shall climb.

HEC. On feathered pinions borne, or how?

POLYM. With form  
Canine endued, and eyeballs glaring fire.

HEC. Whence didst thou learn that I such wondrous change  
Shall undergo?

POLYM. Bacchus, the Thracian seer,  
Gave this response.

HEC. To thee did he unfold  
Nought of the grievous sufferings thou endur'st?

POLYM. Then could you ne'er have caught me by your wiles.

HEC. But on this change of being, after death,  
Or while I yet am living, shall I enter?

POLYM. After your death, and men shall call your tomb——

HEC. By my new form, or what is it thou mean'st?

POLYM. The sepulchre of that vile brute, an object  
Conspicuous to the mariner.

HEC. I care not;  
My vengeance is complete.

POLYM. Cassandra too,  
Your daughter, must inevitably bleed.

HEC. Abomination! On thy guilty head  
These curses I retort.

POLYM. Her shall the wife  
Of Agamemnon slay, who sternly guards  
His royal mansion.

HEC. Such a frantic deed  
As this may Tyndarus' daughter ne'er commit!

POLYM. She next uplifting the remorseless axe  
Shall smite her lord.

AGA. Ha! madman, dost thou court  
Thy ruin?

POLYM. Slay me; for the murderous bath  
Awaits you, when to Argos you return.

AGA. Will ye not drag him from my sight by force?

POLYM. Hear you with grief what I announce?

AGA. My followers,  
Why stop ye not the miscreant's boding mouth?

POLYM. This mouth be closed for ever: I have spoken.

AGA. Will ye not cast him with the utmost speed







# HERCULES DISTRACTED.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AMPHITRYON.

MEGARA.

CHORUS OF THEBAN OLD

MEN.

HERCULES.

LYCUS.

IRIS.

A FRIEND.

MESSANGER.

THESEUS.

SCENE.—BEFORE THE ALTAR OF JUPITER, AT THE ENTRANCE  
OF THE HOUSE OF HERCULES IN THEBES.

## AMPHITRYON, MEGARA.

AMP. Is there on earth, a stranger to the man  
Who shared the same auspicious nuptial bed  
With Jove. Amphitryon born at Argos, sprung  
From Perseus' son Alcæus, me the sire  
Of Hercules? He in these regions dwelt,  
Where from the soil a helmed crop arose;  
Mars, a small number of that race, preserved,  
Whose children's children people Cadmus' city.  
Hence Creon king of Thebes, Menæceus' son,  
Derives his birth, and Creon is the sire  
Of this unhappy Megara, to grace  
Whose hymeneal pomp, each Theban erst  
Attuned the jocund lute, into my house  
When Hercules conducted her. But leaving  
This realm where I resided, and his consort  
And kindred, my son chose to fix his seat  
Within the walls of Argos, of that city  
Erected by the Cyclops, whence I fled  
Stained with Ectoryon's gore: but to alleviate  
My woes, and in his native land obtain  
A quiet residence, this great reward  
He on Eurystheus promised to bestow.  
That he would rid the world of every pest:  
Harassed by Juno's stings, or envious fate,  
With her conspiring: but, his other labours  
Accomplished, he through Tienarus' jaws at length

Went to the house of Pluto, to drag forth  
 Into the realms of day hell's triple hound :  
 He thence returns not. But an old tradition  
 Among the race of Cadmus hath prevailed,  
 That Lycus, Dirce's husband, erst bore rule  
 Over this city, till Jove's sons, Amphion  
 And Zethus, who on milk-white coursers rode,  
 Became its sovereigns. Lycus' son who bears  
 His father's name, no Theban, but arriving  
 From the Eubæan state, slew royal Creon,  
 And having slain him, seized the throne, invading  
 The city with tumultuous broils convulsed.  
 But the affinity which we have formed  
 With Creon, seems to be my greatest curse :  
 For while my son stays in the realms beneath,  
 Lycus th' egregious monarch of this land  
 Would with the children of Alcides kill  
 His consort, by fresh murders to extinguish  
 The past, and kill me too (if one through age  
 So useless may be numbered among men),  
 Lest when the boys attain maturer age,  
 They should avenge their grandsire Creon's death.  
 But I (for my son left me here to tend  
 His children, and direct the house, since he  
 Entered the subterraneous realms of night),  
 With their afflicted mother, lest the race  
 Of Hercules should bleed, for an asylum  
 Have chosen this altar of protecting Jove,  
 Which my illustrious son for a memorial  
 Of his victorious arms did here erect,  
 When he in battle had subdued the Minyans.  
 But we, though destitute of every comfort,  
 Of food, drink, clothing, though constrained to lie  
 On the bare pavement, here maintain our seat,  
 For every hospitable door is barred  
 Against us, and we have no other hope  
 Of being saved. Some of our friends I see  
 Are faithless, and the few who prove sincere,  
 Too weak to aid us. Such is the effect  
 Of adverse fortune o'er the race of men ;  
 May he to whom I bear the least attachment,  
 Never experience that unerring test  
 Of friendship.

MEG.           Thou old man, who erst didst storm  
 The Taphian ramparts, when thou with renown  
 Didst lead the host of Thebes ; the secret will  
 Of Heaven, how little can frail mortals know !  
 For to me too of no avail have proved  
 The fortunes of my father, who elate

With wealth and regal power whence at the breasts  
 Of its possessors spears are hurled by those  
 Whose souls the lust of mad ambition fires,  
 And having children, gave me to thy son,  
 Joining a noble consort in the bonds  
 Of wedlock with Alcides, through whose death  
 These blessings are all fled. Now I, and thou,  
 Old man, are doomed to perish with the sons  
 Of Hercules, whom, as the bird extends  
 Her sheltering wings over her callow brood,  
 I guard. By turns they come and question me :  
 " O mother, whither is my father gone ?  
 What is he doing ? when will he return ?"  
 Though now too young sufficiently to feel  
 How great their loss, thus ask they for their sire.  
 I change the theme, and forge a soothing tale,  
 But am with wonder smitten when the doors  
 Creak on their massive hinges, and at once  
 They all start up, that at their father's knees  
 They may fall prostrate. But what hope hast thou  
 Of saving us, or what support, old man ?  
 For I to thee look up. We from the bounds  
 Of these domains unnoticed cannot 'scape ;  
 Mightier than us, a watchful guard is placed  
 At every avenue, and in our friends  
 No longer for protection can we trust.  
 Explain thyself, if thou hast any scheme,  
 By which thou from impending death canst save us ;  
 But let us strive to lengthen out the time,  
 Since we are feeble.

AMP. 'Tis no easy task  
 In such a situation, O my daughter,  
 To form a sure and instantaneous judgment.

MEG. What is there wanting to complete thy woes,  
 Or why art thou so fond of life ?

AMP. That blessing  
 I still enjoy, still cherish pleasing hopes.

MEG. I also hope, old man : but it is folly  
 To look for what we never can attain.

AMP. We by delaying might avert our fate.

MEG. But I in this sad interval of time  
 Feel piercing anguish.

AMP. The auspicious gales  
 Of fortune, O my daughter, yet may waft  
 Both you and me out of our present troubles,  
 If e'er my son your valiant lord return.  
 But O be pacified yourself, and cause  
 Your children to dry up their streaming tears ;  
 With gentle language and delusive tales

Beguile them, though all fraudulent arts are wretched.  
 For the disasters which afflict mankind  
 Are wearied out ; the stormy winds retain not  
 Their undiminished force ; nor are the blest  
 Perpetually blest : for all things change,  
 And widely differ from their former state.  
 The valiant man is he who still holds fast  
 His hopes ; but to despair bespeaks the coward.

CHORUS, AMPHITRYON, MEGARA.

CHOR. Propped on my faithful staff, from home,  
 And from the couch of palsied age,  
 In melancholy guise I roam,  
 Constrained to chaunt funereal strains,  
 As the expiring swan complains,  
 A war of words alone I wage,  
 In semblance, but a flitting sprite,  
 An airy vision of the night.  
 I totter ; yet doth active zeal  
 This faithful bosom still inspire.  
 Ye children who have lost your sire,  
 Thou veteran, and thou aged dame,  
 Doomed for thy lord these griefs to feel,  
 Whose Pluto's dreary mansions claim ;  
 O weary not your tender feet.  
 Like steeds by galling harness bound,  
 To turn the ponderous mill around,  
 I would advance my friends to meet,  
 Yet are my utmost efforts vain,  
 This shattered frame I scarce sustain :  
 Draw near, O take this trembling hand,  
 And holding fast my robe, support  
 My steps, thy needful aid I court,  
 Because I am too weak to stand.  
 Lead on the chief, though now by years  
 Bowed down, who marshalled on the strand,  
 His comrades erst a hardy band ;  
 With him in youth we launched our spears,  
 Nor then belied our native land.  
 See how their eyes dart liquid fire,  
 Those children emulate their sire ;  
 But still hereditary fate,  
 Pursues with unrelenting hate  
 Their tender years, nor can their charms  
 Redeem them from impending harms.  
 What valiant champions of thy cause,  
 O Greece, thy violated laws,  
 When these thy great supports shall fail,  
 Torn from thy fostering land wilt thou bewail,

But I behold the monarch of the realm,  
Tyrannic Lycus, who these doors approaches.

LYCUS, AMPHITRYON, MEGARA, CHORUS.

LYC. This question (if I may) I to the sire  
And consort of Alcides would propose  
(But, as your king, I have a right to make  
Any inquiries I think fit): How long  
Seek ye to spin out life? What farther hope  
Have ye in view, what succour to ward off  
The stroke of death? Expect ye that the father  
Of these deserted children, who lies stretched  
Amid the realms beneath will thence return,  
That ye bely your rank, and meanly utter  
These clamorous plaints on being doomed to die?  
Through Greece hast *thou* diffused an idle boast,  
That Jove enjoyed thy consort, and begot  
An offspring like himself; while *you* exulted  
In being called wife to the first of heroes.  
But what great action hath your lord performed,  
In having slain that hydra at the lake,  
Or the Nemæan lion whom with snares  
He caught, and then did arrogantly boast  
That he had strangled in his nervous arms?  
Will these exploits enable you to vie  
With me? and for such merit am I bound  
To spare the sons of Hercules, who gained  
A name which he deserved not? He was brave  
In waging war with brutes, in nought beside,  
With his left hand he never did sustain  
The shield, nor faced he the pretended spear,  
But with his bow, that weapon of a dastard,  
Was still prepared for flight: such arms afford  
No proof of courage; but the truly brave  
Is he who in the ranks where he is stationed  
Maintains his ground, and sees with steadfast eye  
Those ghastly wounds the missile javelin gives.  
Old man, I act not thus through cruelty,  
But caution; for I know that I have slain  
Creon *her* father, and possess his throne.  
These children therefore will not I allow  
To live till they attain maturer years,  
Lest they should punish me for such a deed.

AMP. Jove will assert the cause of his own son.  
But as for me, O Hercules, my care  
Shall be to prove the folly of this tyrant:  
For thy illustrious name I will not suffer  
To be reproached. First from a hateful charge

(And that of cowardice I deem most hateful),  
Calling the gods to witness; am I bound  
To vindicate thy honour. I appeal  
To Jove's own thunder, and th' impetuous steeds,  
Which drew Alcides' chariot when he sped  
Those winged arrows to transpierce the flanks  
Of earth-born giants, and among the gods  
Triumphant revelled at the genial board.  
Go next to Pholoe's realm, thou worst of kings.  
And ask the Centaurs' monstrous brood, what man  
They judge to be most brave, whether that title  
Belongs not to my son, who only bears,  
As you assert, the semblance of a hero?  
But should you question the Eubœan mount  
Of Dirphys, where your infancy was nurtured.  
It cannot sound your praise: you have performed  
No glorious action for your native land  
To testify, yet scorn that wise invention  
The quiver fraught with shafts: attend to me  
And I will teach you wisdom. By his arms  
Encumbered, stands the warrior who is sheathed  
In ponderous mail, and through the fears of those  
Who fight in the same rank, if they want courage,  
Loses his life; nor, if his spear be broken,  
Furnished with nought but courage, from his breast  
Can he repel the wound; but he who bends  
With skilful hand the bow, hath this advantage,  
Which never fails him: with a thousand shafts  
He smites the foe, no danger to himself  
Incurring, but securely stands aloof,  
And wreaks his vengeance while they gaze around,  
Without perceiving whence the weapon comes:  
His person he exposes not, but takes  
A guarded post: for what in war displays  
The greatest prudence, is to vex the foe,  
Nor rush at random on their pointed spears.  
Such reasoning on the subject in debate  
With yours indeed agrees not: but what cause  
Have you for wishing to destroy these children?  
How have they injured you? In one respect  
I deem you wise, because you dread the race  
Of valiant men, and feel yourself a coward:  
Yet is it hard on us, if we must bleed  
Your apprehensions to remove; you ought  
To suffer all we would inflict, from us  
Whose merit is superior far to yours,  
Were Jove impartial. Would you therefore wield  
The sceptre of this land, let us depart  
As exiles from the realm, or you shall meet



With strict retaliation, when the gales  
 Of wavering fortune alter. O thou land  
 Of Cadmus for to thee I now will speak,  
 But in reproachful accents, such protection  
 Afford'st thou to the sons of Hercules,  
 Who singly warring with the numerous host  
 Of Minya, caused the Thebans to lift up  
 Their free-born eyes undaunted? I on Greece  
 No praises can bestow, nor will pass over  
 In silence its base treatment of my son,  
 For 'twas its duty in these children's cause,  
 Bearing flames, pointed spears, and glittering mail,  
 To have marched forth, and recompensed the toils  
 Of their great father, who hath purged the sea  
 And land from all its monsters. Such protection  
 Nor doth the Theban city, O my children,  
 Nor Greece afford you : but ye now look up  
 To me a feeble friend who can do nought,  
 But plead for you with unavailing words.  
 For all the vigour which I once possessed  
 Hath now deserted me ; old age assails  
 My trembling limbs and this decrepit frame.  
 Were I again endued with youthful strength,  
 I would snatch up my javelin, and defile  
 With gore the yellow ringlets on the head  
 Of that oppressor, whom his fear should drive  
 Beyond the most remote Atlantic bounds.

CHOR. Are there not causes such as may provoke  
 Those who are virtuous to express their thoughts,  
 Though destitute of eloquence?

LYC. Gain'st me  
 Speak what thou wilt, for thou art armed with words,  
 But for injurious language by my deeds  
 Will I requite thee. Go, send woodmen, some  
 To Helicon, some to Parnassus' vale,  
 Bid them fell knotted oaks, and having borne them  
 Into the city, heap their ponderous trunks  
 Around the altar, and with kindled flames  
 Consume the bodies of this hated race ;  
 So shall they learn that Creon the deceased  
 No longer is the ruler of this land,  
 But that I wield the sceptre. As for you  
 Who thwart my counsels, O ye aged men,  
 Not for the sons of Hercules alone  
 Shall ye lament, but for those evil fortunes  
 Which ye and your own house are doomed to suffer :  
 But this shall ye remember, that to me,  
 Your monarch, ye are slaves.

CHOR.

O ye the race

Of earth, whom Mars erst sowed, when he had torn  
 From the huge dragon's jaws th' envenomed teeth,  
 With those right hands why will ye not uplift  
 The staves on which ye lean, and with his gore  
 Defile the head of this unrighteous man,  
 Not born at Thebes, but in a foreign realm,  
 From inconsiderate youths who gains that homage  
 Which he deserves not? but in evil hour  
 O'er me shalt thou bear rule, nor shall my wealth  
 Acquired by many toils be ever thine :  
 Go, act the tyrant in Eubœa's land,  
 From whence thou hither cam'st : for while I live,  
 The sons of Hercules thou ne'er shalt slay,  
 Nor is their mighty father plunged so deep  
 Beneath earth's surface, that he cannot hear  
 His children's outcries. Thou to whom this land  
 Owes its destruction dost possess the throne :  
 But he its benefactor is deprived  
 Of the rewards he merits. Me thou deem'st  
 Officious, for protecting those I love  
 E'en in the grave, where friends are needed most.  
 O my right arm, how dost thou wish to wield  
 The spear, but through enfeebling age hast lost  
 Thy vigour : else would I have quelled thy pride  
 Who dar'st to call me slave, and in this Thebes,  
 Where thou exult'st, with glory dwelt. A city  
 Diseased through mutiny and evil counsels  
 Is void of wisdom, or would ne'er have chosen  
 Thee for its lord.

MEG.                    Ye veterans, I applaud  
 Your zeal ; for indignation at the wrongs  
 His friends endure becomes the virtuous friend.  
 But let not anger 'gainst your lord expose you  
 To suffer in our cause. My judgment hear,  
 Amphitryon, if to thee in aught I seem  
 To speak discreetly. I these children love  
 (And how can I help loving those I bore?)  
 For whom I have endured the painful throes  
 Of childbirth. And to die is what I think of  
 As of a thing most dreadful ; but the man  
 Who with necessity contends I hold  
 An idiot. But let us, since die we must,  
 Not perish in the flames to furnish scope  
 Of laughter to our foes, which I esteem  
 An ill beyond e'en death : for much is due  
 To the unsullied honour of our house,  
 For thee who erst in arms hast gained renown,  
 To die with cowardice, were a reproach  
 Not to be borne. My lord, though I forbear

To dwell on his just praises, is so noble,  
 He would not wish these children saved, to bear  
 The imputation of an evil name ;  
 For through the conduct of degenerate sons  
 Reproach oft falls on their illustrious sires ;  
 And the examples which my husband gave me,  
 I ought not to reject. But view what grounds  
 Thou hast for hope, that I of these may form  
 A proper estimate. Dost thou expect  
 Thy son to issue from the realms beneath ?  
 What chief deceased from Pluto's loathed abode  
 Did e'er return ? Can we by gentle words  
 Appease this tyrant ? No : we ought to fly  
 From fools who are our foes : but to the wise  
 And generous yield ; for we with greater ease  
 May make a friend of him in whom we find  
 A sense of virtuous shame. But to my soul  
 This thought occurs, that we, the children's sentence,  
 By our entreaties, haply might obtain  
 Converted into exile : yet this too  
 Is wretched, at th' expense of piteous need  
 To compass our deliverance. For their friends  
 Avoid the face of guests like these, and look  
 No longer kindly on the banished man  
 After one day is over. Rouse thy courage,  
 And bleed with us, thee too, since death awaits.  
 By thy great soul, O veteran, I conjure thee.  
 Although the man who labours to repel  
 Evils inflicted by Heaven's wrath, is brave,  
 Yet doth such courage border upon frenzy :  
 For what the fates ordain, no god can frustrate.

CHOR. While yet these arms retained their youthful strength,  
 Had any one insulted thee, with ease  
 Could I have quelled him ; but I now am nothing :  
 On thee, Amphityron, therefore 'tis incumbent  
 To think how best thou may'st henceforth ward off  
 Th' assaults of fortune.

AMP. No unmanly fear,  
 No wish to lengthen out this life, prevents  
 My voluntary death : but I would save  
 The children of my son, though I appear  
 To grasp at things impossible. Behold  
 I bear my bosom to the sword ; pierce, slay,  
 Or cast me from the rock. But I, O king,  
 For this one favour sue to you ; despatch  
 Me and this hapless dame before the children,  
 Lest them we view, most execrable sight,  
 In death's convulsive pangs, to her who bore them,  
 And me their grandsire, shrieking out for aid.

But as for all beside, do what you list,  
For we have now no bulwark which from death  
Can save us.

MEG. I entreat one favour more,  
Which to us both will equally be grateful.  
Permit me in funereal robes to dress  
My children ; for that purpose be the gates  
Thrown open (for the palace now is closed  
Against us) that they from their father's house  
This small advantage may obtain.

LYC. Your wishes  
Shall be complied with. I my servants bid  
Unbar the gates. Go in, b. deck yourselves ;  
The costly robes I grudge not : but no sooner  
Shall ye have put them on, than I to you  
Will come, and plunge you in the shades beneath.

[Exit LYCUS.

MEG. Follow your hapless mother, O my children,  
To your paternal house, where, though our wealth  
Be in the hands of others, our great name  
We still preserve.

AMP. O Jove, 'twas then in vain  
That thou didst deign to share my nuptial couch,  
In vain too, of thy son have I been styled  
The father, for thou hast not proved the friend  
Thou didst appear to be. I, though a man,  
Exceed in virtue thee a mighty god ;  
Because I to their foes have not betrayed  
The sons of Hercules : but thou, by stealth,  
Entering my chamber, to another's wife  
Without permission cam'st ; yet know'st not how  
To save thy friends ; thou surely art a god  
Either devoid of wisdom, or unjust.

[Exit AMPHITRYON and MEGARA.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

For Linus' death, by all the tuneful Nine  
Bewailed, doth Phœbus' self complain,  
And loudly uttering his auspicious strain,  
Smite with a golden quill the lyre ; but mine  
Shall be the task, while songs of praise  
I chaunt and twine the laureate wreath,  
His matchless fortitude t' emblaze,  
Who sought hell's inmost gloom, the dreary shades beneath ;

Whether I call the hero son of Jove,  
 Or of Amphitryon ; for the fame  
 To which his labours have so just a claim,  
 Must e'en in death attract the public love :  
 In the Nemean forest first he slew  
     That lion huge, whose tawny hide  
 And grinning jaws extended wide,  
     He o'er his shoulders threw.

## I. 2.

The winged arrows whizzing from his bow,  
     Did on their native hills confound  
 The Centaurs' race with many a deadly wound :  
 Alcides' matchless strength doth Peneus know,  
     Distinguished by his limpid waves,  
 The fields laid waste of wide extent,  
     With Pelion, and the neighbouring caves  
 Of Homöes, uprooting from whose steep ascent,  
 Tall pines that cast a venerable shade,  
 The monsters armed their forceful hands,  
 And strode terrific o'er Thessalia's lands :  
 Then breathless on th' ensanguined plain he laid  
 That hind distinguished by her golden horns,  
     And still in Dian's temple seen  
 His prize, to glad the huntress queen,  
     Oenöe's walls adorns.

## II. 1.

The chariot with triumphal ensigas graced  
     Ascending, to his stronger yoke  
 He Diomedes' furious coursers broke,  
 Scorning the bit, in hateful stalls who placed  
     By their fell lord, the flesh of man  
     Raging devoured, accursed food ;  
     A stream from their foul mangers ran,  
 Filled with unholy gore, and many a goblet crude,  
 O'er Hebrus' silver tide at the command  
     Of Argos' unrelenting king  
 Eurystheus, he these captive steeds did bring,  
 Close to Anauros' mouth on Pelion's strand.  
 Inhuman Cycnus, son of Mars, next felt  
     The force of his resounding bow,  
 Unsocial wretch, the stranger's foe,  
     Who in Amphanea dwelt.

## II. 2.

Then came he to th' harmonious nymphs, that band  
     Who in Hesperian gardens hold  
 Their station, where the vegetative gold  
 Glows in the fruitage ; with resistless hand

To snatch the apple from its height;  
 The dragon wreathed his folds around  
 The tree's huge trunk, portentous sight,  
 In vain; that monster fell transtixed with many a wound.  
 Into those straits of the unfathomed main  
 He entered, with auspicious gales,  
 Where feared the mariner t' unfurl his sails,  
 And fixing limits to the watery plain  
 His columns reared: then from the heavens' huge load  
 The wearied Atlas he relieved,  
 His arm the starry realms upheaved,  
 And propped the gods' abode.

## III. 1.

Foe to the Amazons' equestrian race  
 He crossed the boisterous Euxine tide,  
 And gave them battle by Mæotis' side.  
 What friends through Greece collected he to face  
 Hippolita, th' intrepid maid,  
 That he the belt of Mars might gain,  
 And tissued robe with golden braid.  
 Still doth exulting Greece the virgin's spoils retain,  
 Lodged in Mycene's shrine, with gore imbrued,  
 The dog of Lerna's marshy plain,  
 Who unresisting multitudes had slain,  
 The hundred-headed hydra, he subdued,  
 Aided by fire, and winged shafts combined,  
 These from his well-stored quiver flew,  
 And triple-formed Geryon slew,  
 Fierce Erythræa's hind.

## III. 2.

But having finished each adventurous strife,  
 At length in evil hour he steers  
 To Pluto's mansion, to the house of tears,  
 The goal of labour, there to end his life,  
 Thence never, never to return;  
 His friends dismayed forsake these gates,  
 In hopeless solitude we mourn.  
 Hell's stern award is passed, the boat of Charon waits  
 To their eternal home his sons to bear,  
 Most impious lawless homicide!  
 For thee, O Hercules, thee erst his pride,  
 Thy sire now looks with impotent despair.  
 Had I the strength which I possessed of yore,  
 I with my Theban friends, arrayed  
 In brazen arms, thy sons would aid:  
 But youth's blest days are o'er.

Clad in funereal vestments I behold  
 The children of Alceid's erst the great,  
 With his loved wife and his decrepit sire  
 Conducting them. O wretched me ! no longer  
 Can I restrain the fountain of these tears  
 Which gush incessant from my aged eyes.

## MEGARA, AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

MEG. Come on. What priest, what butcher is at hand  
 To slay these wretched children, or transpierce  
 My bosom ? Now the victims stand prepar'd  
 For their descent to Pluto's loathed abode.  
 By force, my children, are we borne along  
 United in th' unseemly bands of death ;  
 Decrepit age with helpless infancy  
 And intermingled matrons. O dire fate  
 Of me and of my sons, whom these sad eyes  
 Shall never more behold ! Alas ! I bore,  
 I nurtured you, to be the scorn, the sport,  
 Of our inveterate foes, and by their hands  
 To perish. Each fond hope, which from the words  
 Of your departed father erst I formed,  
 Hath proved fallacious. The deceased to *thee*  
 Allotted Argos, in Eurystheus' palace  
 Wert *thou* to dwell a mighty king, and wield  
 The sceptre of Pelasgia's fruitful land,  
 Then with the lion's hide himself had worn  
 Thy front he covered : *you* were to ascend  
 The throne of Thebes for brazen chariots famed,  
 Possessing my hereditary fields,  
 Such were the hopes of your exulting sire,  
 Who to *your* hand consigned that ponderous mace  
 Deceitful gift of Dædalus : on *thee*,  
 Thou little one, he promised to bestow  
 Oecalia, which his shafts had erst laid waste :  
 To you all three, these realms in threefold portions  
 Did he distribute ; for your father's views  
 Were all magnanimous : but I marked out  
 Selected consorts for you, and formed schemes  
 Of new affinities, from the domains  
 Of Athens, Sparta, and the Theban city ;  
 That binding up your cables, and secure  
 From the tempestuous deep, ye might enjoy  
 A happy life : these prospects now are vanished ;  
 For to your arms hath changeful Fortune given  
 The Destinies to be your brides, while tears  
 Are your unhappy mother's lustral drops.  
 Your grandsire celebrates the nuptial feast,

O'er which he summons Pluto to preside,  
 The father of your consorts. But, alas !  
 Whom first of you my children, or whom last  
 To this fond bosom shall I clasp, on whom  
 Bestow a kiss, whom in my arms sustain ?  
 How like the bee with variegated wings  
 Shall I collect the sorrows of you all,  
 And blend the whole together in a flood  
 Of tears exhaustless ? O my dearest lord,  
 If any of those spirits who reside  
 In Pluto's realms beneath, can hear the voice  
 Of mortals, in these words to thee I speak :  
 O Hercules, thy father and thy sons  
 Are doomed to bleed ; I perish too who erst  
 On thy account was by the world called happy.  
 Protect us, come, and to these eyes appear,  
 Though but a ghost : thy presence will suffice :  
 For these thy children's murderers, when with thee  
 Compared, are dastards.

AMP. To appease the powers  
 Of hell beneath, O woman, be thy care.  
 But lifting to the skies my suppliant hands,  
 I call on thee, O Jove, that, if thou mean  
 To be a friend to these deserted children,  
 Thou interpose without delay and save them,  
 For soon 'twill be no longer in thy power :  
 Thou oft hast been invoked ; but all my prayers  
 Are ineffectual ; die, it seems, we must.  
 But, O ye aged men, the bliss which life  
 Can yield is small, contrive then how to pass  
 As sweetly as is possible the hours  
 Which fate allots you, e'en from morn till night  
 Shaking off every grief : for Time preserves not  
 Our hopes entire, but on his own pursuits  
 Intent, deserts us, borne on rapid wings.  
 Look but on me, amid the sons of men  
 Conspicuous erst performing glorious deeds ;  
 And yet hath Fortune in one single day  
 Taken all from me, like a feather wafted  
 Into the trackless air. I know not him  
 To whom collected stores of wealth or fame  
 Are durable. Farewell, for this, my comrades,  
 Is the last time ye shall behold your friend.

HERCULES, MEGARA, AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

MEG. Ha ! O thou aged man, do I behold  
 My dearest husband ? How shall I find utterance ?

AMP. I know not, O my daughter ; for I too  
 Am with amazement seized.



MEG.                      This sure is he  
Who as we heard was in the realms beneath;  
Else doth some vision in the noontide glare  
Delude our senses. But what frantic words  
Were those I spoke as if 'twas all a dream?  
This is no other than thy real son,  
Thou aged man. Come hither, O my children,  
Cling to your father's robe, with speed advance,  
Quit not your hold; for ye in him shall find  
An equal to our great protector love.

HER. All hail, thou mansion, and thou vestibule  
Of my abode; thee with what joy once more  
Do I behold, revisiting the light.  
Ha! what hath happened? I my children see  
With garlands on their temples, and my wife  
Amidst a throng of men, my father too  
Weeping for some mischance. I'll go to them,  
And ask the cause. What recent ill, O woman,  
Hath happened to this house?

MEG. My dearest lord,  
O thou who to thy aged father com'st  
A radiant light, in safety hast thou reached,  
At this important crisis, the abodes  
Of those thou lov'st.

HER.                               What mean you by these words ?  
What tumults, O my sire, are we involved in ?

MEG. We are undone ; but, O thou aged man,  
 Forgive, if I've anticipated that  
 Thou would'st have said to him ; for in some point,  
 Our sex are greater objects of compassion  
 Than males. I deem my children dead ; I too  
 Am perishing.

HER. O Phoebus! with what preludes  
Do you begin your speech?

MEG. My valiant brothers,  
And aged sire, alas ! are now no more.

HER. Who slew them, how, or with what weapon?

MEG. Lycus,  
The monarch of this city, was their murderer.

HER. With arms do he oppose them, or prevail,  
When foul sedition through the land diffused  
Its pestilent contagion?

MEG. By revolt  
He holds the sceptre of the Theban realm.

HER. But wherefore hath this sudden panic reached  
You and my aged sire?

MEG. He would have slain  
Thy father, me, and these defenceless children.

HER. What mean you? could he fear my orphan race?

MEG. Lest they hereafter might avenge the death  
Of Creon.

HER. But what garb is this they wear,  
Which suits some corse?

MEG. Already in these vestments  
For our funereal rites are we arrayed.

HER. And were ye on the point of perishing  
By violence? Ah me!

MEG. Our friends desert us;  
For we have heard that thou wert dead.

HER. Whence rose  
This comfortless depression of the soul?

MEG. Eurystheus' heralds the sad tidings bore.

HER. But for what cause did ye forsake my house,  
My sacred Lares?

MEG. From his bed thy sire  
Was forcibly dragged forth.

HER. So void of shame  
Was Lycus as to treat his age with scorn?

MEG. Shame dwells not near the shrine of brutal force.

HER. Were we thus destitute of friends when absent?

MEG. What friends abide with him who is unhappy?

HER. But did they scorn the battles which I fought  
Against the Minyans?

MEG. I to thee repeat it,  
Calamity is friendless and forlorn.

HER. Will ye not cast from your dishevelled hair  
These wreaths of Pluto? will ye not look up  
To yon bright sun, and ope your eyes to view  
Scenes far more pleasing than the loathsome shades  
Of hell beneath? But I, for wrongs like these  
Demand my vengeful arm, with speed will go  
And overturn the house of that new king,  
His impious head I to the ravenous hounds  
Lopped from his trunk will cast, and each base Theban  
Who with ingratitude repays my kindness  
With this victorious weapon smite: my shafts  
The rest shall scatter, till Ismenos' channel  
Be choked up with the corpses of the slain,  
And Dirce's limpid fountain stream with gore.  
For whom, in preference to my wife, my children,  
And aged father, shall I aid? Farewell,  
Ye labours which unwittingly I strove  
To accomplish, mindless of these dearest pledges;  
In their defence I equally am bound  
To yield up life, if for their father they  
Were doomed to bleed. What! shall we call it noble  
To war against the hydra or the lion,  
And execute the mandates of Eurystheus,

If I avert not my own children's death ?  
No longer else shall I, as erst, be styled  
Alcides the victorious.

CHOR. It is just  
Parents should aid their sons, their aged sire,  
And the dear partner of the nuptial bed.

AMP. My son, this mighty privilege is yours,  
To be the best of friends to those you love,  
And a determined foe to those you hate.  
But be not too impetuous.

HER. In what instance  
Have I been hastier, O my honoured sire,  
Than it becomes me ?

AMP. To support his cause,  
The king hath many, who in fact are poor,  
Though fame accounts them rich: they raised a tumult,  
And caused the ruin of the state, to plunder  
Their neighbours: for the fortunes they possessed  
Are through their own extravagance and sloth  
Reduced to nothing. As the gates you entered,  
These could not fail to see you: O beware  
Lest since you by your foes have been perceived,  
You perish when you least foresee your danger,  
Oppressed by numbers.

HER. Though all Thebes beheld me,  
I care not. But when I descried a bird  
Of evil omen perched aloof, I knew  
That there had some calamity befallen  
My house, and therefore with presaging soul  
In secrecy I entered these domains.

AMP. Draw near with pious awe, my son, salute  
The Lares, and display that welcome face  
In your paternal mansions. For to drag  
Your wife and children forth, with me your sire  
To murder us, the king himself will come.  
But all will prosper, if you here remain,  
And a secure asylum will you find.  
Nor through the city spread a loud alarm  
Ere your designs succeed.

HER. Thus will I act,  
For thou hast rightly spoken; I am entering  
The palace. From the sunless caves beneath  
Of Proserpine, after a long delay  
Returning, first to our domestic gods  
Will I be mindful to address my vows.

AMP. Have you indeed then visited the house  
Of Pluto, O my son ?

HER. And thence the dog  
With triple-head brought to these realms of light.

AMP. Conquered in battle, or on you bestowed  
By hell's indulgent goddess?

HER. I prevailed  
O'er him in combat, and have been so happy  
As to behold the far-famed mystic orgies.

AMP. But is the beast lodged in Eurystheus' palace?

HER. Him Cthonia's groves and Hermion's walls  
confine.

AMP. Knows not Eurystheus that you are returned  
Into this upper world?

HER. He doth not know :  
For I came first to learn what passes here.

AMP. But wherefore in the realms beneath, so long  
Did you remain?

HER. I there prolonged may stay,  
My sire, to bring back Theseus from the shades.

AMP. And where is he, gone to his native land?

HER. He went to Athens, pleased with his escape  
From the infernal regions. But attend

Your father to the palace, O my sons,  
Which now ye enter in a happier state

Than when ye left it : but take courage, cease  
To pour forth floods of tears ; and, O my wife,

Collect thyself, let all thy terrors cease,  
And loose my garments ; for I have not wings,

Nor would I vanish from my friends. Alas !  
Their hold they quit not, but cling faster still,

And faster to my vest. Because ye stand  
Upon the verge of ruin, I will take

And bear you hence, as by the ship light boats  
Are guided o'er the deep : for I refuse not

The care my children claim. Here all mankind  
Are on a level, they of nobler rank

And mean condition, to their progeny  
Bear equal love. The gifts of fortune vary,

Some have abundant wealth, and some are poor ;  
But the whole human race feels this attachment.

[*Exit* HERCULES and MEGARA, with the children

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Youth is light, and free from care  
But now a burden on my head  
Heavier than *Ætna's* rock, old age, I bear,  
Before these eyes its sable veil is spread.

Not for the wealth of Asiatic kings,  
 Or heaps of gold that touched yon roof sublime,  
 Ere would I barter life's enchanting prime ;  
     Hence wealth a brighter radiance flings,  
     And poverty itself can charm :  
     But thou, curst dotage, art the sum  
 Of every fancied, every real harm ;  
 May'st thou be plunged beneath the deep, nor come  
 To peopled town, or civilized abode,  
 Go wing thy distant flight along th' aerial road.

## I. 2.

Did the gods with sapient care  
 Mete out their bounty to mankind,  
 The good, the gift of twofold youth should share  
 Unquestioned token of a virtuous mind,  
 Behold life's son its blest career renew,  
 While the degenerate sleep to wake no more.  
 We by these means distinctly might explore  
     Their merits with as clear a view,  
     As sailors, who each starry spark  
     Enumerate that adorns the skies.  
 But now the gods have by no certain mark  
 Directed whom we for their worth should prize,  
 Whom shun as wicked : uninformed we live.  
 Revolving time hath nought but plenteous wealth to give.

## II. 1.

Mindful of its ancient themes,  
 This faltering tongue shall ne'er refuse,  
 Oft as I wander by their haunted streams,  
 To blend each gentle grace and tuneful muse :  
 O may I dwell among the harmonious choirs,  
 My brows still circled with a laureate wreath !  
 Still shall the bard, a hoary veteran, breathe  
     The strains Mnemosuné inspires :  
     While memory wakes, I ne'er will cease  
     Th' exploits of Hercules to sing ;  
 Where Bromius yields the purple vine's increase,  
 Where Libyan pipes and the lute's sevenfold string  
 Are heard in dulcet unison ; to praise  
 The Nine who aid the dance, I'll wake my choral lays.

## II. 2.

Delian virgins at the gate  
 Assembled, festive pæans sing,  
 The triumphs of Latona's son relate,  
 And nimbly vaulting form their beauteous ring.

Into thy temple, by devotion led,  
 O Phœbus, will I raise my parting breath ;  
 The swan thus warbles at the hour of death :  
     Though hoary hairs my cheeks o'erspread.  
     How great the hero's generous love,  
     Whose merits aid our votive song,  
 Alcides the resistless son of Jove ;  
 Those trophies, which to noble birth belong  
 By him are all surpassed, his forceful hand  
 Restoring peace, hath cleansed this monster-teeming land.

LYCUS, AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

LYC. Forth from the portals at due season comes  
 Amphitryon ; for 'tis long since ye were decked  
 In robes and trappings such as suit the dead.  
 But go, command the children and the wife  
 Of Hercules without these gates t' appear,  
 Because ye have engaged that ye will die  
 By your own hands.

AMP.                               You persecute, O king,  
 Me whom already fortune hath made wretched,  
 And with sharp taunts insult my dying race :  
 Although in power supreme, you ought to act  
 With moderation ; but since you impose  
 This harsh necessity, we must submit,  
 And execute your will.

LYC.                               Where's Megara ?  
 Where are the children of Alcmena's son ?

AMP. To me she seems, as far as I can guess,  
 From looking through the door——

LYC.                               What grounds hast thou  
 For this opinion ?

AMP.                               In a suppliant posture  
 To sit before the Lares.

LYC.                               And implore them  
 With unavailing plaints to save her life.

AMP. In vain too calls she on her lord deceased.

LYC. But he is absent, he can ne'er return.

AMP. Unless some god should raise him up again.

LYC. Go thou, and from the palace lead her hither.

AMP. 'Twould make me an accomplice in the murder,  
 If this I acted.

LYC.                               Since thy soul recoils,  
 I, whom such idle scruples cannot move,  
 Will with their mother bring the children forth.  
 Follow my steps, my servants, that at length  
 We may behold sweet peace succeed our toils

[Exit LYCUS.]

AMP. Depart : for to that place the Fates ordain  
 You now are on the road ; perhaps the sequel  
 Will be another's province : but expect,  
 Since you have done amiss, to suffer vengeance.  
 He, O ye veterans, at a lucky hour  
 Enters the palace, for on ambushed swords  
 His feet will stumble, while the villain hopes  
 Those he would murder are too near at hand  
 To 'scape : but I will go to see him fall  
 A breathless corse : for when our foe endures  
 The just requital of his impious deeds,  
 There is a joy resulting from his death.

[Exit AMPHITRYON.]

CHOR. Changed are our evil fortunes. To the shades  
 He who was erst a mighty king descends.  
 O justice, and ye dread vicissitudes  
 Of fate, ordained by Heaven !

1st SEMICHOR. Thou art at length  
 Gone thither, where by death thou for those taunts,  
 With which thou o'er the virtuous didst exult,  
 Shalt make atonement.

2nd SEMICHOR. My delight bursts forth  
 In floods of tears : for now is come that day  
 The tyrant deemed would never visit him.

1st SEMICHOR. But let us also look into the palace,  
 My aged friend, and mark if yonder miscreant  
 Be punished as I wish.

LYC. [within.] Ah me ! ah me !

CHOR. That melody most grateful to mine ear  
 Beneath yon roofs commences ; nor is death  
 Far distant ; for these cries the monarch utters  
 Are but a prelude to the fatal stroke.

LYC. [within.] Ye realms of Cadmus, I through treachery  
 perish !

2nd SEMICHOR. Others have perished by that bloody  
 hand.  
 Since then the retribution thou endur'st  
 Is just, endure it bravely.

1st SEMICHOR. Where is he  
 Who uttered 'gainst the blest immortal powers  
 His foolish blasphemies, and called the gods  
 Too weak to punish him ?

2nd SEMICHOR. That impious man  
 Is now no more. Yon vaulted roofs are silent,  
 Let us begin the harmonious choral lay ;  
 For, as I wished, our comrades prove victorious.

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

The sumptuous banquet, with th' enlivening dance  
 Now every Theban shall employ ;  
 Dried are our tears, and past mischance  
 Yields to the lyre abundant themes of joy :  
 Stretched low in dust the tyrant lies ;  
 But he, who by an ancient right  
 Obtains the sceptre, is our king ;  
 From Acheron's loathed stream behold him rise,  
 Revisiting the cheerful realms of light,  
 And hope, unlooked for, doth fresh transports bring.

## I. 2.

The gods take cognizance of broken trust,  
 Nor are they deaf to holy prayer.  
 On gold and fortune, power unjust  
 Attends ; man's reason is too weak to bear  
 The joint temptations. Heaven at length,  
 Whose kind protection we invoke,  
 Deigning with pity to behold  
 Our woes, to the neglected laws their strength  
 Restoring, with vindictive fury broke  
 The sable car which bore the god of gold.

## II. 1.

Now let the flowery wreath, the victor's pride,  
 Adorn Ismenos ; let each street employ  
 The hours in dance and social joy ;  
 Let Dirce from the silver wave arise,  
 And old Asopus' daughters by her side,  
 Forsaking their paternal stream,  
 Conspire to aid our rapturous theme,  
 And for Alcides claim the victor's prize.  
 Ye Pythian rocks, with waving forests crowned,  
 And seats of Helicon's melodious choir,  
 Come every nymph, with cheerful sound,  
 Visit these walls which to the clouds aspire ;  
 In helmed crop here warriors filled the plains.  
 Whose lineage undecayed from age to age remains.

## II. 2.

O ye, the partners of one nuptial bed,  
 Happy Amphytrion, sprung from mortal race,  
 And Jove, who rushed to the embrace



Of bright Alcmena ; for of thee aright,  
 Though erst, O Jove, I doubted, was it said  
     Thou didst enjoy that beauteous dame ;  
     With the renown his triumphs claim,  
 Time through the world displays Alcides' might,  
 Emerged from grisly Pluto's realms abhorred,  
 Who quits the darksome caverns of the earth,  
     To me a far more welcome lord,  
 Than yon vile tyrant of ignoble birth.  
 Now to the bloody strife we lift our eyes ;  
 The vengeful sword is bared, if Justice haunt the skies.  
 SEMICHOR. Ha ! are we all by the same panic seized ?  
 My aged friends, what spectre, hovering o'er  
 The palace, do I see ? Those tardy feet  
 Raise from the ground, precipitate thy flight,  
 Be gone.—From me, O Pæan, mighty king,  
 Avert these evils.

## IRIS, A FIEND, CHORUS.

IRIS.                   O, ye aged men,  
 Be not dismayed : the fiend whom ye behold  
 Is daughter of old Night, and I am Iris,  
 The gods' ambassadress. We are not come  
 To harm your city ; for we only war  
 Against one man, who, sprung 'tis said from Jove  
 And from Alcmena : till he had performed  
 Severest labours, fate preserved his life ;  
 Nor did his father Jove permit, or me,  
 Or Juno, e'er to hurt him : but, each toil  
 Eurystheus' hate enjoined, now he hath finished,  
 Those oft-polluted hands with recent gore  
 Will Juno stain, by urging him to slay  
 His children : in this scheme I too conspire.  
 Come on then, armed with a relentless heart,  
 Unwedded daughter of the pitchy Night ;  
 Instil into that hero's breast such frenzy  
 As shall o'erturn his reason, and constrain him  
 To perpetrate this murder ; his wild steps  
 Goad onward, throw the bloody cable forth,  
 That having sent this band of graceful sons,  
 Slain by their father's arm, adown the gulf  
 Of Acheron, th' effects of Juno's wrath  
 And mine, he may experience ; for the gods  
 Would be mere things of no account, but great  
 Would be the power of man, if he escaped  
 Unpunished.

FIEND.               I from noble parents spring,  
 Night is my mother ; and that blood which streamed  
 From the foul wound of Ouranus, my sire :



CHOR. Thou city, groan ; thy choicest flower,  
The son of Jove, is cropped : O Greece,  
Thy benefactor's fatal hour  
Impends. To thee for ever lost,  
Assailed by that infernal pest,  
The dauntless chief, deprived of peace,  
Shall feel his agonizing breast  
With horrible distraction tossed.  
Hence in her brazen chariot went  
The raging fiend, on mischief bent ;  
She urges with a scorpion goad  
Her steeds along th' ethereal road.  
That hundred-headed child of Night,  
With all those hissing snakes around,  
From her envenomed eyeballs bright  
The Gorgon thus directs the wound.  
Soon changed by Heaven's supreme decree,  
Is man's short-lived felicity.  
Ye infants, soon shall ye expire,  
Slain by your own distracted sire.  
Ah me ! thy son, without delay,  
Shall be left childless, mighty Jove ;  
For on his tortured soul shall prey  
Yon fiend, and by the powers above  
Vengeance commissioned to destroy.  
O mansion erst the scene of joy !  
To form a prelude to this dance,  
Neither the cheering timbrel's sound,  
Nor sportive Menades advance ;  
Here human gore shall stream around,  
Instead of that refreshing juice,  
Which Bacchus' purple grapes produce.  
Away, ye children, danger's nigh,  
For he who wakes this hostile strain,  
Traces your footsteps as ye fly ;  
Nor will the fiend with fruitless rage,  
A war beneath those mansions wage.  
Alas ! we sink o'erwhelmed with woe,  
My tears shall never cease to flow.  
I wail the grandsire hoar with age,  
The mother too who bore that train  
Of lovely children, but in vain.  
Lo, what a tempest shakes the wall,  
And makes th' uprooted mansion fall !  
What mean'st thou, frantic son of Jove ?  
The hellish uproar thou dost raise,  
Filling the palace with amaze,  
Is such as vexed the realms above,

Till issuing with victorious might,  
 Pallas invincible in fight  
 The huge Enceladus oppressed,  
 And piled all Ætna on his breast.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MES. O ye whose heads are whitened o'er with age !

CHOR. Why dost thou call me with so loud a voice ?

MES. Atrocious are the mischiefs which have happened  
 Within the palace.

CHOR. I need now call in  
 No other seer. The boys are slain. Ah me !

MES. Indulge your groans, for such events as these  
 Demand them.

CHOR. By a foe, e'en by the hand  
 Of their own sire, in whom that foe they found.

MES. No tongue can utter woes beyond what we  
 Have suffered.

CHOR. What account hast thou to give  
 Of the dire fate the father on his sons  
 Inflicted ? Sent by the avenging gods,  
 Say why such mischiefs visited this house,  
 And how the children miserably fell.

MES. To purify the house were victims brought  
 Before Jove's altar, after Hercules  
 Had slain and cast the monarch of this land  
 Forth from these doors. Beside the victor stood  
 His band of graceful children, with his sire  
 And Megara. The sacred vase was borne  
 Around the altar : from ill-omened words  
 We all abstained. But while Alcmena's son  
 In his right hand a kindled torch sustained,  
 Ready to dip it in the lustral water,  
 He made a silent stand ; on this delay  
 The children steadfastly observed their sire,  
 But he no longer was the same ; his eyes  
 Were seized with strong convulsions, from their fibres  
 Blood started forth, his bearded cheeks with foam  
 Were covered : he midst bursts of laughter wild  
 Cried : " Wherefore need I kindle, O my father,  
 The fire for sacrifice, ere I have slain  
 Eurystheus, in a double toil engaged,  
 When I at once might better finish all ?  
 Soon as I hither bring Eurystheus' head,  
 These hands which reek already with the gore  
 Of Lycus, will I cleanse. Pour forth those waters  
 Upon the ground, and cast your urns away.  
 Who brings my bow, my club ? I to Mycene  
 Will go : let spades and levers be prepared,

That I from their foundations may o'erturn  
Those walls which with the plummet and the line  
The Cyclops reared." Then eager to depart,  
Although he had no chariot, yet he talked  
As if he had one, fancying that he mounted  
The seat, and with his hand as with a thong  
Drove the ideal steeds. His servants laughed,  
And at the same time trembled; till one cried  
(As on each other they with eager eyes  
Were gazing), "Doth my master sport with us,  
Or is he frantic?" Meanwhile through the palace  
Backward and forward he with hasty step  
Was walking: but no sooner did he reach  
That spacious hall, where at the genial board  
The men are wont t' assemble, than he said  
That he was come to Nisus' ancient city,  
And to th' imperial dome: and on the floor,  
As if reclining at the genial board,  
Bade us set forth the banquet. But the pause  
Which intervened was short, ere he exclaimed,  
That he was traversing the Isthmian rocks  
O'ergrown with woods; then casting off his mantle  
He strove though there was no antagonist  
With whom to strive, proclaimed himself the victor,  
The name of that imaginary foe  
Announcing, over whom he had prevailed:  
But 'gainst Eurystheus he anon did utter  
Menaces the most horrible, and talk  
As if he at Mycene had been present.  
His father strove to hold his vigorous arm,  
And said to him; "What mean you, O my son?  
What wanderings into distant realms are these?  
Hath not the blood of him you have just slain  
Distracted you?" Then for Eurystheus' sire  
Mistaking his own father, as he strove  
To touch his hand, repelled the trembling suppliant:  
Against his sons, the quiver and the bow,  
Thinking to slay the children of Eurystheus,  
He next made ready; they with terror smitten  
Ran different ways; the first beneath the robes  
Of his unhappy mother skulked; a second  
Flew to the shade the lofty column formed:  
Under the altar quivering like a bird,  
The last concealed himself: their mother cried,  
"What mean'st thou, O thou father, would'st thou slay  
Thy sons?" Aphitryon too, that aged man,  
And all the servants shrieked. But round the pillar  
The boy pursuing, he at length turned short,  
And meeting him, as foot to foot they stood,

Transfixed his liver with a deadly shaft ;  
 Supine he fell, and with his streaming gore  
 Distained the sculptured pillars, at whose base  
 He breathed his last. But, with a shout, Alcides  
 Uttered these boasts : " One of Eurystheus' brood  
 Slain by this arm, for the inveterate hate  
 His father bore me, to atone, here lies  
 A breathless corse." Against another then,  
 Who to the basis of the altar fled,  
 And hoped to 'scape unseen, he bent his bow ;  
 But ere he gave the wound, the wretched youth  
 Fell at his father's knees, stretched forth his hands  
 To touch his chin, or twine around his neck,  
 And cried : " O spare my life, my dearest sire,  
 Yours, I am yours indeed ; nor will you slay  
 Eurystheus' son." But he with glaring eyes  
 Looked like a Gorgon, while the boy pressed on  
 So close, he had no scope to aim the shaft,  
 But as the smith the glowing anvil smites,  
 Full on his auburn tresses he discharged  
 The ponderous mace, the crashing bones gave way.  
 Scarce had he slain the second, when he ran  
 To butcher his third son o'er both their corpses :  
 But the unhappy mother in her arms  
 Caught up, into an inner chamber bore  
 The child, and closed the doors : but he, as if  
 He had indeed been at the Cyclops' city,  
 With levers from their hinges forced them, pierced  
 His wife and offspring with a single shaft,  
 And then to slay his aged father rushed  
 With speed impetuous : but a spectre came,  
 Which to our eyes the awful semblance bore  
 Of Pallas brandishing her pointed spear,  
 And threw a rocky fragment at the breast  
 Of Hercules, which checked his murderous frenzy,  
 And plunged him into sleep. Upon the ground  
 Headlong he fell, where 'midst the ruins lay,  
 Rent from its pedestal a broken column :  
 But rallying from our flight, we, by his sire  
 Assisted, to the pillar bound him fast  
 With thongs, that on his wakening from this trance  
 He might commit no more atrocious deeds.  
 There doth he taste an inauspicious sleep,  
 First having slain his children and his consort.  
 I know no mortal more completely wretched.

[Exit MESSENGER.]

CHOR. There was a murder in the Argive land  
 Most wondrous and unparalleled through Greece  
 In days of yore, which the confederate daughters

Of Danaus perpetrated ; but their crimes  
 By the dire fate of Progne's only son  
 Were far surpassed. I of a bloody deed  
 Now speak which they committed, they whose voice  
 Equals the Muses' choir ; but thou who spring'st  
 From Jove himself, hast in thy frenzy slain  
 All thy three sons ; for them what groans, what tears,  
 What invocations to the shades beneath,  
 Or songs shall I prepare to soothe the rage  
 Of grisly Pluto ? Shivered on the ground  
 The portals of that lofty mansion view,  
 Behold the corpses of the children stretcht  
 Before their miserable sire, whose senses,  
 Since he hath slain them, in profoundest sleep  
 Are buried. Mark those knotty cords around  
 The brawny limbs of Hercules, entwined  
 And to the columns in the palace fixed.  
 But old Amphitryon, like a bird who wails  
 Over its callow brood, with tardy step  
 Comes hither in the bitterness of grief.

## AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

*The Palace gates thrown open, discover HERCULES stretched on  
 the ground and sleeping.*

AMP. Ye aged Thebans, will ye not be silent,  
 Will ye not suffer him dissolved in sleep  
 His miseries to forget ?

CHOR. These tears, these groans,  
 To you, O venerable man, I pay,  
 To those slain children, and the chief renowned  
 For his victorious conflicts.

AMP. Farther still  
 Retire ; forbear, forbear those clamorous sounds,  
 Lest his repose ye break, and from a trance  
 The sleeper rouse.

CHOR. How dreadful was this slaughter !

AMP. Ha ! ha ! begone, for he in wild confusion  
 Is starting up. Why will ye not lament,  
 Ye aged men, in a more gentle tone ?  
 Lest roused from sleep he burst his chains, destroy  
 The city, smite his sire, and with the ground  
 Lay these proud mansions level.

CHOR. This I hold  
 Impossible.

AMP. Be silent, I will mark  
 Whether he breathe : O let me place my ear  
 Still closer.

CHOR. Sleeps he ?

AMP. An accursed repose,  
 Alas ! he tastes, who hath his consort slain,  
 And slain his sons with that resounding bow.

CHOR. Now wail.

AMP. I wail those children's fate.

CHOR.

Your son,

Alas ! old man, our equal pity claims.

AMP. Observe strict silence, for again he rises  
 And turns around : I will conceal myself  
 Beneath that roof.

CHOR. Be of good cheer : night seals  
 The eyelids of your son.

AMP. Mark, mark me well,  
 I am so wretched that without reluctance  
 I can bid life adieu : but if he kill  
 Me too who am his father, guilt on guilt  
 Shall he accumulate, and join the stings  
 Of parricide to those which from the Furies  
 Who haunt him, he already doth endure.

CHOR. Better you then had died, when you prepared  
 T' avenge the slaughtered brothers of Alcmena,  
 And stormed the fortress of the Taphian isle.

AMP. Fly, leave the palace instantly ; avoid  
 That frantic man, who from his sleep is roused,  
 For adding soon fresh slaughter to the past,  
 With Bacchanalian transport shall he range  
 Through Cadmus' city.

CHOR. Why hast thou, O Jove,  
 Hated thy son so bitterly, and plunged him  
 Into this sea of troubles ?

HER. [*waking.*] Ha ! I breathe,  
 And view each wonted object, air, and earth,  
 And these bright solar beams. Into what storm,  
 What dreadful perturbation of the soul  
 Have I been plunged ! all heated I transpire,  
 Not from my lungs, but from my feverish heart.  
 Behold me ! wherefore am I bound with chains,  
 Like a disabled ship towed into haven,  
 And by this youthful chest and nervous arm  
 Joined to a broken pillar ? Here I sit  
 Contiguous to the corpses of the slain ;  
 My winged shafts lie scattered on the ground,  
 With that unerring bow which erst I bore  
 In war to guard me, and with care pre-erved.  
 Sent by Eurystheus, am I then arrived  
 A second time at the drear shades beneath ?  
 Neither the rock of Sisyphus, nor Pluto,  
 Nor Ceres' sceptred daughter, do I see.  
 I sure am stricken senseless with amazement,



And know not where I am. But ho ! what friend  
Is near, or at a distance, who will come  
To give me information ? For each object  
Which I was erst acquainted with seems strange.

AMP. Shall I approach this scene of my afflictions  
Ye aged men ?

CHOR. I will attend your steps,  
Nor meanly in calamity betray you.

HER. Why dost thou weep, my sire, and veil those  
eyes,  
Retiring far from thy beloved son ?

AMP. My son—for though unhappy, you are mine.

HER. But what calamity do I endure  
That causes thee to shed these tears ?

AMP. Your woes  
Are such, that any god, if he endured  
The same, would groan.

HER. This hath a dreadful sound :  
But you, my fortunes have not yet explained.

AMP. Because if you your senses have recovered,  
Yourself behold them.

HER. Tell me what thou mean'st—  
If to my charge thou lay'st some recent crime.

AMP. If you no longer to the powers of hell  
Are subjected, the truth will I unfold.

HER. Alas ! how darkly thou again allud'st  
To what my soul suspects.

AMP. Your looks I watch  
To see if reason wholly be restored.

HER. I recollect not that I e'er was frantic.

AMP. [*to the CHORUS.*]  
Shall I unbind the shackles of my son,  
Or how must we proceed ?

HER. Say who was he  
That bound me ? for with scorn have I been treated.

AMP. Thus much of your afflictions may you know :  
Forbear all farther questions.

HER. Is thy silence  
Sufficient then to teach me what I wish  
To learn ?

AMP. O Jove, dost thou behold the curses  
Hurled on thy son from envious Juno's throne ?

HER. What dire effects of her inveterate rage  
Have I endured ?

AMP. Of that vindictive goddess  
No longer think : but to your own afflictions  
Attend.

HER. Alas ! I utterly am ruined !  
What farther ill wouldst thou disclose ?

AMP. See there  
The corpses of your murdered children lie.

HER. Alas! what dreadful objects strike these eyes!

AMP. My son, against your progeny you waged  
An inauspicious war.

HER. Why talk of war?  
Who slew them?

AMP. You, your arrows, and the cause  
Of all these mischiefs, that remorseless goddess.

HER. What mean'st thou, or what crime have I committed,  
My father, O thou messenger of ill?

AMP. By frenzy urged. But you such questions ask,  
As I with grief must answer.

HER. Have I murdered  
My consort also?

AMP. All these deeds of horror  
That single arm did perpetrate.

HER. Alas!  
A cloud of griefs surrounds me.

AMP. For this cause  
Your fortunes I lament.

HER. Have I demolished  
My own house too, with Bacchanalian rage  
Inspired?

AMP. The whole of what I know amounts  
To this, that you are most completely wretched.

HER. Where did this fatal madness seize me first?

AMP. As round the altar, you, a flaming brand,  
To expiate the foul murder which distains  
Your hands, were bearing.

HER. Ah! why lengthen out  
A guilty life, when of my dearest children

I am become the murderer? Why delay  
To leap from the high rock, or with a sword

Transpierce this bosom, on myself their blood  
Avenging? or t' avert that infamy

Which waits me, shall I rush into the flames?

But Theseus comes to bar these desperate counsels,  
My kinsman and my friend: in a true light

To him shall I appear, and the pollution  
I have incurred by slaying my own sons

Will be conspicuous to my dearest comrade.

What shall I do? or where can I find out

A solitude impervious to my woes?

On rapid wings, O could I mount, or plunge

Into the nether regions of the earth?

Give me a veil to darken o'er my head.

For 'tis with shame I think on the offence

Caused by this deed: but to myself alone

Ascribing the defilement of their blood,  
I wish not to contaminate the guiltless.

THESEUS, AMPHITRYON, HERCULES, CHORUS.

THE. An armed squadron of Athenian youths  
I hither bring, who near Asopus' stream  
Are stationed to assist your son in battle.  
For to the city of Erechtheus' race  
A rumour came, that Lycus, having seized  
The sceptre of this land, is waging war  
Against you. O aged man, I to repay  
The benefits which Hercules conferred  
On me, whom from the deary shades beneath  
In safety he redeemed, on your behalf  
Attend, if of this arm, or of my troops,  
Ye need the help. But, ha, what means the floor  
With weltering corpses heaped? hath my design  
Proved ineffectual? am I then arrived  
Too late to remedy the dreadful mischiefs  
Which have already ta'en effect? who slew  
Those children, or whose consort was the dame  
Whom I behold? for where the boys are laid,  
No signs appear of any battle fought:  
But sure I of some other recent ill  
Now make discovery.

AMP. O thou goddess, throned  
Upon that hill where verdant olives spring.

THE. Why speak you to me in this piteous tone,  
And with such prelude?

AMP. Grievous are the ills  
Which we endure through Heaven's severe behest.

THE. What boys are they o'er whose remains you weep?

AMP. Them did my miserable son beget,  
And when begotten slay, this impious murder  
He dared to perpetrate.

THE. Express yourself  
In more auspicious terms.

AMP. I wish t' obey  
Th' injunctions thou hast given.

THE. What dreadful words  
Are these which you have uttered?

AMP. In a moment  
Were we undone.

THE. What mean you, what hath happened?

AMP. This frenzy seized him sprinkled with the venom,  
Which from the hundred-headed hydra flowed.

THE. Such Juno's wrath. But who, O aged man,  
Stands 'mong the dead?

AMP. My son, my valiant son,  
Inured to many toils, who in that war  
Where earth's gigantic brood were slain, advanced  
Among the gods to the Phlegræan field  
Armed with his buckler.

THE. Ah, what mighty chief  
Was e'er so wretched?

AMP. Scarcely shalt thou know  
A man with greater labours vexed, and doomed  
To wander through more regions.

THE. But why veils he  
Beneath that robe his miserable head?

AMP. Because thy presence, friendship's sacred ties  
Added to those of kindred, and the gore  
Of his slain children, fill his soul with shame.

THE. I with his griefs am come to sympathize;  
Uncover him.

AMP. That garment from your eyes  
Remove, display your visage to the sun.  
It ill becomes my dignity to weep:  
Yet I a suppliant strive to touch your beard,  
Your knees, your hand, and shed these hoary tears.  
O curb your soul, my son, whose fierceness equals  
That of the lion, else 'twill hurry you  
To bloody impious rage, and make you add  
Mischiefs to mischiefs.

THE. Ho! on thee I call,  
On thee, who to that seat of misery seem'st  
Fast riveted; permit thy friends to see  
Thy face: for darkness hath no cloud so black  
As to conceal thy woes. Why dost thou wave  
Thy hand and point to those whom thou hast slain,  
Lest by this converse I pollute myself?  
I am not loth to share thy woes; I erst  
Was happy (which my soul is ever bound  
To recollect with gratitude) when thou  
From hell's loathed gloom, the mansion of the dead,  
Didst safely bear me to the realms of light.  
For I abhor th' attachment of those friends  
Which time impairs, him too who would enjoy  
Their better fortunes, but refuse to sail  
In the same bark with those who prove unblest.  
Rise up, unveil thy miserable head  
And look on me. A noble mind sustains  
Without reluctance what the gods inflict.

HER. Did you, O Theseus, see me slay my children?

THE. I heard, and now behold the ills thou speak'st of.

HER. Then why didst thou uncover to the sun  
My guilty head?

THE. Why not? canst thou, a man,  
Pollute the gods?

HER. Avaunt, O wretch, avaunt,  
For I am all contagion.

THE. To a friend  
No mischief from his friend can be transmitted.

HER. Your conduct I applaud, nor will deny  
That I have served you.

THE. I who erst received  
Those favours at thy hands, now pity thee.

HER. I am indeed an object of your pity,  
From having slain my sons.

THE. For thee I weep,  
Because to me thou heretofore wert kind  
When vexed by other ills.

HER. Did you e'er meet  
With those who were more wretched?

THE. Thy afflictions  
Are of such giant bulk, that they to heaven  
Reach from this nether world.

HER. Hence am I ready  
For instant death.

THE. Canst thou suppose the gods  
Regard thy threats?

HER. Self-willed are they and cruel,  
And I defy the gods.

THE. Restrain thy tongue,  
Lest thou by uttering such presumptuous words  
Increase thy sufferings.

HER. I with woes am fraught  
Already, nor remains there space for more.

THE. But what design'st thou? whither art thou borne  
With frantic rage?

HER. In death will I return  
To those abodes beneath, whence late I came.

THE. Thou speak'st the language of a vulgar man.

HER. Exempt from all calamity yourself,  
On me these admonitions you bestow.

THE. Are these fit words for Hercules to use,  
Who many toils endured?

HER. I had not suffered  
Thus much, if any bounds had circumscribed  
My labours.

THE. Benefactor of mankind,  
And their great friend?

HER. From them no aid I find;  
But Juno triumphs.

THE. Greece will not permit thee  
To perish unregarded.



Uttering a voice indignant, will forbid me  
 To touch its surface, ocean, o'er its waves,  
 And every river, o'er its streams, to pass.  
 I shall be like Ixion then, with chains  
 Fixed to the wheel. 'Twere better that no Greek  
 With whom I in my happier days conversed  
 Should see me more. What motive can I have  
 For living? or to me of what avail  
 Were it to keep possession of this useless  
 And this unholy being? flushed with joy,  
 Let Jove's illustrious consort, in the dance,  
 Strike with her sandals the resplendent floor  
 Of high Olympus: for she now hath gained  
 Her utmost wish, and from his basis torn  
 The first of Grecian warriors. Who can pray  
 To such a goddess, who, with envy stung,  
 Because Jove loved a woman, hath destroyed  
 The benefactors of the Grecian realm,  
 Those blameless objects of her hate?

THE.

This mischief

Springs from no god except the wife of Jove.  
 Well dost thou judge, in saying that 'tis easier  
 To give thee wholesome counsel, than endure  
 Such agonies. But no man 'scapes unwounded  
 By fortune, and no god; unless the songs  
 Of ancient bards mislead. Have not the gods  
 Among themselves formed lawless marriages?  
 Have they not bound in ignominious chains  
 Their fathers, to obtain a throne? In heaven  
 Yet dwell they, and bear up beneath the load  
 Of all their crimes. But what canst thou allege,  
 If thou, frail mortal as thou art, those ills  
 Immoderately bewail'st to which the gods  
 Without reluctance yield? from Thebes retire,  
 Since thus the laws ordain; and follow me  
 To Pallas' city: when thy hands are there  
 Cleansed from pollution, I to thee will give  
 A palace, and with thee divide my wealth.  
 The presents which the citizens to me  
 Appropriated, when twice seven blooming victims  
 I by the slaughter of the Cretan bull  
 Redeemed, on thee will I bestow. For portions  
 Of land are through the realm to me assigned:  
 These, while thou liv'st henceforth shall by thy name  
 Be called: but after death, when to the shades  
 Of Pluto thou descend'st, with sacrifice  
 And with the sculptured tomb, shall Athens grace  
 Thy memory. For her citizens have gained  
 This fairest wreath from every Grecian state,

By yielding succour to the virtuous man  
 Their glories are augmented : and to thee  
 Will I repay with gratitude the kindness  
 Which thou deserv'st for saving me ; for thou  
 Hast need of friends at present : but no friend  
 Is wanted when the gods confer renown ;  
 For, if he wills, Jove's aid is all-sufficient.

HER. You hold a language foreign to my griefs.  
 But I suppose not that the gods delight  
 In lawless nuptials, that their hands are bound  
 With galling chains, nor did I e'er believe,  
 Nor can I be convinced, that one bears rule  
 Over another. For a deity  
 If he be truly such, can stand in need  
 Of no support. But by some lying bard  
 Those miserable fables were devised.  
 Although I am most wretched, yet I thought  
 I might be charged with cowardice for leaving  
 These realms of light. For he who bears not up  
 'Gainst adverse fortune, never can withstand  
 The weapon of his foe. I am resolved  
 To wait for death with firmness : to your city  
 Meantime will I retreat, and am most grateful  
 For your unnumbered gifts. Unnumbered labours  
 Have I been erst acquainted with ; from none  
 Did I e'er shrink, these eyes did never stream  
 With tears, nor thought I that I e'er should come  
 To such a pitch of meanness as to weep :  
 But now, it seems, must Fortune be obeyed.  
 I am content. Thou, O my aged sire,  
 Behold'st my exile, thou in me behold'st  
 The murderer of my children : to the tomb  
 Consign their corpses with funereal pomp,  
 And o'er them shed the tributary tear :  
 For me the laws allow not to perform  
 This office. Let their mother, e'en in death,  
 Clasp to her breast, and in her arms sustain,  
 Our wretched offspring, whom in evil hour  
 I slew reluctant. But when thou with earth  
 Hast covered them, thy residence still keep  
 Here in this city, miserably indeed,  
 Yet on thy soul lay this constraint, to bear  
 With me the woes which I most deeply feel.  
 The very sire, ye children, who begot,  
 Murdered you ; no advantage ye derive  
 From what this arm by all my labours gained,  
 And from your father's triumphs no renown.  
 Have not I slain thee too who didst preserve  
 My bed inviolate, and o'er my house  
 Long watch with patient care ? Ah me ! my wife,



My sons : but how much more to be lamented  
 Am I myself, from them for ever torn ?  
 Ye melancholy joys of kisses lavished  
 On their remains, and ye my loathed companions,  
 The weapons which I still retain, but doubt  
 Whether to keep or dash them to the ground ;  
 For they, while at my side they hang, will seem  
 To utter these reproachful words : " With us  
 Thy consort and thy children hast thou slain,  
 Yet thou the very instruments preserv'st  
 Which were their murderers." After such a charge  
 Can I still bear them ? what can I allege ?  
 But stripping off those arms with which through Greece  
 I have achieved full many glorious deeds,  
 Shall I expose myself to those who hate me,  
 And die ignobly ? I must not abandon  
 But keep them still, though sorrowing. Aid me, Theseus,  
 In this one enterprise ; to Argos go  
 And for your friend obtain the great reward  
 Promised for dragging from the shades of hell  
 That execrable hound : lest if by you  
 Deserted, I through grief for my slain children  
 Should come to some calamitous end. Thou realm  
 Of Cadmus, and ye citizens of Thebes,  
 With tresses shorn, in concert weep ; the tomb  
 Of my slain children visit, there bewail,  
 In one funereal dirge, the dead, and me ;  
 For smitten with the same dire scourge of fate  
 By Juno, we all perish.

THE. Hapless man,  
 Arise ; enough of tears.

HER. I cannot rise,  
 These limbs are now grown stiff.

THE. Calamity  
 Subdues the valiant.

HER. Would I were a stone,  
 Insensible to sufferings !

THE. Cease these complaints ;  
 And to the friend who comes to serve thee, give  
 Thy hand.

HER. But let me not wipe off the blood  
 Upon your garments.

THE. Wipe it off, nor scruple,  
 For I object not.

HER. Of my sons bereft,  
 In you the likeness of a son I find.

THE. Fling round my neck thine arm : I'll lead the way.

HER. A pair of friends : though one of us be wretched.  
 Such, O my aged father, is the man  
 We ought to make a friend.

THE. His native realm  
Produces an illustrious progeny.

HER. Turn me around, that I may see my sons.

THE. Hoping such philtre may thy griefs appease.

HER. This earnestly I wish for, and would clasp  
My father to this bosom.

AMP. Here, lo, here !

For what my son desires, to me is grateful.

THE. Of all the labours thou didst erst achieve,  
Hast thou thus lost the memory ?

HER. All those ills  
Were less severe than what I now experience.

THE. Should any one behold thee grown unmanly,  
He could not praise thee.

HER. Though to you I seem  
Degraded to an abject life, I trust  
That I my former courage shall resume.

THE. Where now is the illustrious Hercules ?

HER. What had you been, if still you in the shades  
Had miserably dwelt ?

THE. Then sunk my courage  
Beneath the meanest of the human race.

HER. Why then persist in saying that my woes  
Have quite subdued me ?

THE. Onward !

HER. Good old man,  
Farewell.

AMP. Farewell too, O my son.

HER. My children  
Inter as I directed.

AMP. O, my son,  
But who will bury me ?

HER. I.

AMP. When will you  
Come hither ?

HER. After thou hast for my children  
Performed that pious office.

AMP. How ?

HER. I'll fetch thee  
From Thebes to Athens.—Bear into the palace  
My children's corpses which pollute the ground.  
But as for me, who have disgraced and plunged  
My house in ruin, I will follow Theseus,  
Towed like a battered skiff. Whoe'er prefers  
Wealth or dominion to a steadfast friend,  
Judges amiss.

CHOR. Most wretched, drowned in tears,  
Reft of our great protector, we depart.

# THE CHILDREN OF HERCULES.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

IOLAUS.  
COPREUS.  
CHORUS OF ATHENIAN  
OLD MEN.

DEMOPHOON.  
MACARIA.  
ALCIBIEN.  
MESSENGER.

EURYSTHEUS.

SCENE.—BEFORE THE ALTAR OF JUPITER, IN THE FORUM AT  
MARATHON, A CITY IN THE ATHENIAN DOMINIONS.

IOLAUS.

LONG have I held this sentiment : the just  
Are born the streams of bounty to diffuse  
On all around them ; while the man whose soul  
Is warped by interest, useless in the State,  
Untractable and harsh to every friend,  
Lives only for himself ; in words alone  
This doctrine I imbibed not. Through a sense  
Of virtuous shame and reverence for my kindred  
When I in peace at Argos might have dwelt,  
I singly shared the toils of Hercules,  
While he on earth remained ; but now he dwells  
In heaven, I guard his children, though protection  
Be what I need myself. For when their sire  
Forsook this nether world, Eurystheus strove  
Immediately to slay us : but I escaped  
From that oppressor's fangs, and though to me  
Lost is my country, I have saved my life.  
But we poor vagabonds, from city fly  
To some fresh city, ever forced to change  
Our dwelling ; for Eurystheus deems it meet  
To add this wrong to former wrongs, he sends  
His heralds wheresoe'er he hears we settle,  
And claims and drives us forth from every land ;  
No slight resentment from the Argive realm  
Against our friends denouncing, he reminds them  
Of his own prosperous fortunes ; when they see

My weakness, and these little ones bereft  
 Of their great father, to superior might  
 They crouch, and force the suppliant to depart.  
 But with the exiled race of Hercules  
 A voluntary exile, I partake  
 Their evil fortunes, steadfastly resolved  
 Not to betray them; by malignant tongues  
 It never shall be said, "Oh, mark these orphans!  
 Since their sire's death their kinsman Iolaus  
 Protects them not." But, exiled from all Greece,  
 On reaching Marathon and the domain  
 Subject to the same rulers, here we sit  
 Before the altars of the gods, and sue  
 For their assistance. In this region dwell  
 Two sons of Theseus, I am told, by lot  
 Who portion out this realm, they from Pandion  
 Descend, and to these children are allied.  
 We therefore undertook our present journey  
 To the Athenian realm; two aged guides  
 Conduct the hapless wanderers; my attention  
 Is to the boys devoted; but Alcmena,  
 Entering the adjacent temple, in her arms  
 Tenderly clasps the female progeny  
 Of her departed son. Amid the crowd  
 We fear to introduce these tender virgins,  
 Or place them at the altars of the gods.  
 But Hyllus and his brothers, more mature  
 In years, inquire in what far distant land  
 A fortress for our future residence  
 We yet can find, if we from these domains  
 By force should be expelled. My sons, come hither,  
 Cling to this garment; for to us I see  
 Eurystheus' herald coming, by whose hate,  
 We wanderers, banished from each friendly realm,  
 Are still pursued. Thou, execrable miscreant,  
 Perish thyself, and perish he who sent thee:  
 For to the noble father of these children  
 Oft hath that tongue enjoined severest toils.

COPREUS, IOLAUS.

COP. What, think'st thou unmolested to enjoy  
 This pleasant seat, and have thy vagrant steps  
 Entered at length a city prompt to fight  
 Thy battles? for the man who will prefer  
 Thy feeble arm to that of great Eurystheus,  
 Exists not. Hence! why in these useless toils  
 Dost thou persist? thou must return to Argos  
 Where they have doomed thee to be stoned.

IOL. Not thus :  
For in this altar shall I find protection,  
And this free country on whose soil we tread.

COP. Wilt thou constrain me then to have recourse  
To violence?

IOL. With forceful hand, nor me  
Nor these poor children shalt thou hence expel.

COP. Ere long shalt thou perceive that thou hast uttered  
Erroneous prophesies.

IOL. This ne'er shall be  
Long as I live.

COP. Depart, for I will seize them  
'Gainst thy consent, and to Eurystheus' power  
Surrender up, for they to him belong.

IOL. Aid me, ye ancient citizens of Athens,  
For we, though suppliants, forcibly are torn  
E'en from Jove's public altar, and the wreaths  
Twined round our sacred branches are polluted ;  
Shame to your city, insult to the gods.

#### CHORUS, IOLAUS, COPREUS.

CHOR. What clamorous voices from yon altars rise ?  
What mischiefs are impending ?

IOL. See a man  
Burdened with age, wretch that I am ! lie prostrate.

CHOR. Who threw thee down ? what execrable hand——

IOL. 'Tis he, O stranger, he who to your gods  
Yielding no reverence, strives with impious force  
E'en now, to drag me from this hallowed seat  
Before Jove's altar.

CHOR. He ! But from what land  
Cam'st thou, old man, to this confederate state  
Formed of four cities ? From the distant coast  
Of steep Eubœa did ye ply your oars ?

IOL. The life I lead, O stranger, is not that  
Of vagrant islanders ; but in your realm  
From famed Mycene's bulwarks I arrive.

CHOR. Among thy countrymen, old man, what name  
Thou bear'st, inform me.

IOL. Ye perchance knew somewhat  
Of Iolaus, great Alcides' comrade,  
A name not quite unnoticed by renown.

CHOR. I formerly have heard of him : but say  
Who is the father of that infant race,  
Whom with thy arm thou guid'st ?

IOL. These are the sons  
Of Hercules, O strangers, they, to you,  
And to your city, humble suppliants come.

CHOR. On what account, inform me ; to demand  
An audience of the state ?

IOL. That to their foes  
They may not be surrendered up, nor torn  
Forcibly from the altars of your gods,  
And carried back to Argos.

COP. But thy lords  
Who bear rule over thee, and hither trace  
Thy steps, will ne'er be satisfied with this.

CHOR. O stranger, 'tis our duty to revere  
The suppliants of the gods : with forceful hand  
Shall no man drag thee from this holy spot,  
This seat of the immortal powers ; dread justice  
Shall guard thee from the wrong.

COP. Out of your land  
The vagrant subjects of Eurystheus drive,  
As I admonish ; and this hand shall use  
No violence.

CHOR. How impious is that city  
Which disregards the helpless stranger's prayer !

COP. 'Twere best to interfere not in these broils,  
And to adopt some more expedient counsels.

CHOR. You, therefore, to the monarch of this realm  
Should have declared your errand, ere thus far  
You had proceeded : but with brutal force  
These strangers from the altars of the gods  
Presume not to convey, and to this land  
Of freedom yield due reverence.

COP. But what king  
Rules this domain and city ?

CHOR. Theseus' son,  
Renowned Demophoon.

COP. Better I with him  
This contest could decide : for all I yet  
Have spoken, is but a mere waste of words.

CHOR. Behold, he hither comes in haste, and with him,  
To hear this cause, his brother Acamas.

DEMOPHOON, IOLAUS, COPREUS, CHORUS.

DEM. Since by thy speed, old man, thou hast outstripped  
Thy juniors, and already reached the shrine  
Of Jove, inform me what event hath caused  
This multitude t' assemble.

CHOR. There the sons  
Of Hercules in suppliant posture sit,  
And with their wreaths, as you behold, O king,  
Adorn the altar ; that is Iolaus,  
The faithful comrade of their valiant sire.

DEM. How needed their distress these clamorous shrieks ?

CHOR. [*turning towards COPREUS.*]

He raised the uproar, when by force he strove  
To beat them hence, and on his knees, to earth  
Threw the old man, till I for pity wept

DEM. Although he in the habit which he wears  
Adopts the mode of Greece, such deeds as these  
Speak the barbarian. But without delay  
On thee it is incumbent now to tell me  
The country whence thou cam'st.

COP.

I am an Argive ;

Thus far to solve your question : but from whence  
I come, and on what errand, will I add ;  
Mycene's king, Eurystheus, sends me hither  
To fetch these vagrants home : yet I, O stranger,  
Will with abundant justice, in my actions,  
As well as words, proceed ; myself an Argive,  
I bear away these Argives, I but seize  
The fugitives who from my native land  
Escaped, when by the laws which there prevail  
They were ordained to bleed. We have a right,  
Because we are the rulers of the city,  
To execute the sentence we enact  
Against our own subjects. To the sacred hearths  
Of many other states when they repaired,  
We urged the self-same reasons, and none ventured  
To be the authors of their own destruction.  
But haply they in you may have perceived  
A foolish tenderness, and hither come,  
Desperate themselves, you also to involve  
In the same perils, whether they succeed  
Or fail in the emprise : for they no hope  
Can cherish, while you yet retain your reason,  
That you alone, in all the wide extent  
Of Greece, whose various regions they have traversed,  
Should pity those calamities which rise  
But from their own imprudence. Now compare  
The alternative proposed ; by sheltering them  
In these dominions, or allowing us  
To bear them hence, what gain may you expect ?  
Side but with us, these benefits are yours :  
Eurystheus' self, and Argos' numerous troops,  
Will aid this city with their utmost might ;  
But if, by their seducing language moved,  
Ye harbour groundless pity for their woes,  
Arms must decide the strife. Nor vainly think  
We will desist till we have fully tried  
The temper of our swords. But what excuse  
Have ye to plead ? Of what domains bereft  
Are ye provoked to wage a desperate war

With the Tirynthian Argives? What allies  
 Will aid you? What pretext can ye allege  
 To claim funereal honours for the slain?  
 The curses of your city will await  
 Such conduct; for the sake of that old man,  
 Whom I may justly call a tomb, a shadow,  
 And those unfriended children, should you step  
 Into the yawning gulf. Suppose the best  
 Which possibly can happen, that a prospect  
 Of future good hence rises; distant hopes  
 Fall short of present gain. In riper years  
 Ill can these youths be qualified to fight  
 Against the Argive host (if this elate  
 Your soul with hope), and ere that wished event  
 There is a length of intermediate time  
 In which ye may be ruined; but comply  
 With my advice; on me no gift bestow,  
 Let me but take what to ourselves belongs,  
 Mycene shall be yours. But oh, forbear  
 To act as ye are wont, nor form a league  
 With those of no account, when mightier friends  
 May be procured.

DEM. Who can decide a cause  
 Or ascertain its merits till he hear  
 Both sides distinctly?

IOI. In your land, O king,  
 This great advantage, freedom of reply  
 To the malignant charge against me urged,  
 I find, and no man, as from other cities,  
 Shall drive me hence. But we have nothing left  
 For which it now behoves us to contend  
 With him, nor aught, since that decree hath passed,  
 To do with Argos; from our native land  
 We are cast forth. In this distressful state,  
 How can he drag us back again with justice  
 As subjects of Mycene, to that realm  
 Which hath already banished us? We there  
 Are only foreigners. But why should he  
 Whom Argos dooms to exile, by all Greece  
 Be also exiled? Not by Athens sure;  
 For ne'er will Athens from its blest domains  
 Expel the race of Hercules, appalled  
 By Argos' menaced wrath. For neither Trachis,  
 Nor is that city of Achaia here,  
 Whence thou by boasting of the might of Argos  
 In words like those which thou hast uttered now,  
 These suppliants didst unjustly drive away  
 Though seated at the altars. If thy threats  
 Here too prevail, no longer shall we find



Freedom, not even in Athens; but I know  
 Full well the generous temper of its sons,  
 And rather would they die. For to the brave  
 Shame is a load which renders life most hateful.  
 Enough of Athens—for immoderate praise  
 Becomes invidious; I remember too  
 How oft I have been heretofore distressed  
 By overstrained encomiums. But on you  
 How greatly 'tis incumbent to protect  
 These children will I show, since o'er this land  
 You rule; for Pitheus was the son of Pelops,  
 From Pitheus Æthra sprung, from Æthra Theseus  
 Your father; from your ancestors to those  
 Of your unhappy suppliants I proceed;  
 Alcides was the son of thundering Jove  
 And of Alcmena; from Lysidice,  
 Daughter of Pelops, did Alcmena spring,  
 One common grandsire gave your grandame birth,  
 And theirs; so near in blood are you to them;  
 But, O Demophoon, what beyond the ties  
 Of family you to these children owe  
 Will I inform you, and relate how erst  
 With Theseus in one bark I sailed, and bore  
 Their father's shield, when we that belt, the cause  
 Of dreadful slaughter, sought; and from the caves  
 Of Pluto, Hercules led back your sire.  
 This truth all Greece attests. They in return  
 From you implore this boon, that to their foes  
 They may not be surrendered up, nor torn  
 By force from these your tutelary gods,  
 And banished from this realm. For to yourself  
 'Twere infamous and baneful to your city  
 Should suppliants, exiles, sprung from ancestors  
 The same with yours (ah, miserable me!  
 Behold, behold them!) with a forceful arm  
 Be dragged away. But to your hands and beard,  
 Lifting these hallowed branches, I entreat you  
 Slight not Alcides' children, undertake  
 Their cause; and, oh, to them become a kinsman,  
 Become a friend, a father, brother, lord,  
 For better were it to admit these claims,  
 Than suffer them to fall beneath the rage  
 Of Argive tyrants.

CHOR. I with pity heard  
 Their woes, O king, but now I clearly see  
 How noble birth to adverse fortune yields;  
 For though they sprung from an illustrious sire,  
 Yet meet they with afflictions they deserve not.

DEM. Three powerful motives urge me, while I view

The misery which attends you, not to spurn  
 These strangers ; first dread Jove, before whose altars  
 You with these children sit ; next kindred ties,  
 And services performed in ancient days,  
 Give them a claim to such relief from me  
 As from their godlike father mine obtained ;  
 And last of all that infamy which most  
 I ought to loathe ; for if I should permit  
 A foreigner this altar to despoil,  
 I in a land of freedom shall no longer  
 Appear to dwell, but to surrender up,  
 Through fear, the suppliants to their Argive lords,  
 In this extreme of danger. Would to heaven  
 You had arrived with happier auspices ;  
 But tremble not lest any brutal hand  
 Should from this hallowed altar force away  
 You and the children. Therefore go thou back  
 To Argos, and this message to Eurystheus  
 Deliver ; tell him too if there be aught  
 Which 'gainst our guests he can allege, the laws  
 Are open ; but thou shalt not drag them hence.

COP. Not if I prove that it is just, and bring  
 Prevailing reasons ?

DEM. How can it be just  
 To drive away the suppliant ?

COP. Hence no shame  
 Shall light on me, but ruin on your head.

DEM. Should I permit thee to convey them hence  
 In me 'twere base indeed.

COP. Let them be banished  
 From your domains, and I elsewhere will seize them.

DEM. Thou fool, who deem'st thyself more wise than  
 Jove !

COP. All villains may, it seems, take refuge here.

DEM. This altar of the gods, to all affords  
 A sure asylum.

COP. In a different light,  
 This to Mycene's rulers will appear.

DEM. Am not I then the monarch of this realm ?

COP. Offer no wrong to them, if you are wise.

DEM. Do ye then suffer wrong when I refuse  
 To violate the temples of the gods ?

COP. I would not have you enter on a war  
 Against the Argives.

DEM. Equally inclined  
 Am I to peace, yet will not I yield up  
 These suppliants.

COP. Hence am I resolved to drag  
 Those who belong to me.

DEM. Thou then to Argos  
Shalt not with ease return.

COP. Soon will I make  
Th' experiment and know.

DEM. If thou presume  
To touch them, thou immediately shalt rue it.

COP. I by the gods conjure you not to strike  
A herald.

DEM. Strike I will, unless that herald  
Learn to behave discreetly.

CHOR. Go. And you,  
O king, forbear to touch him.

COP. I retire :  
For weak in combat is a single arm.  
But I again shall hither come, and bring  
A host of Argives armed with brazen spears :  
Unnumbered warriors wait for my return.  
The king himself, Eurystheus, is their chief ;  
He on the borders of Alcathous' realm  
Waits for an answer. He in glittering mail,  
Soon as he hears your arrogant reply,  
To you, your subjects, this devoted realm,  
And all its wasted forests will appear,  
For we in vain at Argos should possess  
A band so numerous of heroic youths,  
If we chastised not your a-suming pride. [Exit COPREUS.

DEM. Away, detested miscreant ; for I fear not  
Thy Argos : and thou ne'er, by dragging hence  
These suppliants, shalt disgrace me : for this city  
As an appendage to the Argive realm  
I hold not, but its freedom will maintain.

CHOR. 'Tis time each sage precaution to exert,  
Ere to the confines of this land advance  
The troops of Argos : for Mycene's wrath  
Is terrible in combat, and more fierce  
Than heretofore will they invade us now.  
For to exaggerate facts beyond the truth  
Is every herald's custom. To his king,  
How many specious tales do you suppose  
Of the atrocious insults he endured,  
He will relate, and add how he the loss  
Of life endangered ?

IOL. To the sons devolve  
No honours which exceed the being born  
Of an illustrious and heroic sire,  
And wedding into virtuous families.  
But on that man no praise will I bestow,  
Who by his lusts impelled, among the wicked  
A nuptial union forms ; hence to his sons

Disgrace, instead of pleasure, he bequeaths.  
 For noble birth repels adversity  
 Better than abject parentage. When sinking  
 Under the utmost pressure of our woes,  
 We find these friends and kinsmen, who alone  
 Amid the populous extent of Greece  
 Stand forth in our behalf. Ye generous youths,  
 Now give them your right hands, and in return  
 Take those of your protectors : O my sons,  
 Draw near : we have made trial of our friends.  
 If ye again behold your native walls,  
 Possess the self-same mansions, and the honours  
 Which your illustrious father erst enjoyed ;  
 These deem your saviours and your friends, nor wield  
 Against their fostering land the hostile spear.  
 On your remembrance let these benefits  
 Be ever stamped, and hold this city dear ;  
 For they deserve your reverence, who from us  
 Repel so great a nation, such a swarm  
 Of fierce Pelasgian troops : and, though they see  
 Our poverty and exile, have refused  
 To yield us up, or banish from their realm.  
 Both while I live, and after the cold grave  
 Receives me at the destined hour, my friend,  
 I with loud voice your merits will applaud,  
 Approaching mighty Theseus, and my words  
 Shall soothe your father's ear when I recount  
 With what humanity you have received us,  
 And how protected the defenceless sons  
 Of Hercules : by your illustrious birth  
 Distinguished, you the glories of your sire  
 Through Greece maintain : sprung from a noble lineage,  
 Yet are you one among that chosen few  
 Who in no instance deviate from the virtues  
 Of your great ancestry : although 'mid thousands  
 Scarce is a single instance to be found  
 Of those who emulate their father's worth.

CHOR. This country, in a just and honest cause,  
 Is ever prompt to succour the distressed.  
 Hence in its friends' behalf hath it sustained  
 Unnumbered toils, and now another conflict  
 I see impending.

DEM. Rightly hast thou spoken,  
 And in such toils I feel a conscious pride.  
 These benefits shall never be forgotten ;  
 But an assembly of the citizens  
 I instantly will summon, and arrange  
 A numerous squadron, to receive the onset  
 Of fierce Mycene's host, first sending spies

To meet them, lest they unawares assail us,  
 For the bold warrior, who without delay  
 Goes forth to battle, keeps the foe aloof.  
 I also will collect the seers, and slay  
 The victims; but do you, old man, meanwhile  
 Enter the palace with these children, leaving  
 Jove's altar: for my menial train are there,  
 Who will with fond solicitude attend you,  
 Although I am not present: but go in.

IOL. I will not leave the altar; on this seat  
 We suppliants will remain, and pray to Jove,  
 That prosperous fortunes may attend your city.  
 But when you from this conflict are with glory  
 Released, we to your palace will repair;  
 Nor are the gods, who war on our behalf,  
 O king, inferior to the gods of Argos.  
 For o'er that city, Jove's majestic consort,  
 Juno, but here Minerva doth preside.  
 This I maintain, that nought ensures success  
 Beyond the aid of mightier deities,  
 Nor will imperial Pallas be subdued. [*Exit DEMOPHOON.*]

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I.

Boast as thou wilt, and urge thy proud demand,  
 This nation disregards thy ire,  
 Thou stranger from the Argive land.  
 Nor can thy sounding words control  
 The steadfast purpose of my soul:  
 Great Athens, by her lovely choir  
 Distinguished, shall unstained preserve  
 Her ancient glory, nor from virtue swerve;  
 But thou, devoid of wisdom, dost obey  
 The son of Sthenelus, the tyrant's impious sway,

## II

Who com'st amidst an independent state,  
 In nought inferior to the strength  
 Of Argos, and with brutal hate  
 Dar'st, though a foreigner, to seize  
 The exiles, who our deities  
 Implore, and in these realms at length  
 From their distress obtain a shield:  
 Thou e'en to sceptred monarchs wilt not yield,  
 Yet no just plea thy subtle tongue hath found.  
 How can such conduct wrap the man whose judgment's  
 sound?

## III.

Peace is the object of my dear delight :  
 But thou, O tyrant, thou whose breast  
 Well may I deem by frenzy is possest,  
 If 'gainst this city thou exert thy might,  
 Pant'st after trophies which thou ne'er shalt gain.  
 Bearing targe and brazen lance  
 Others with equal arms advance.  
 O thou, who fondly seek'st th' embattled plain,  
 Shake not these turrets, spare the haunt  
 Of every gentle grace.—Thou wretch, avaunt.

DEMOPHOON, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

IOL. Why com'st thou hither, O my son, with eyes  
 Expressive of affliction ? from the foe  
 What recent information canst thou give ?  
 Do they delay their march, are they at hand,  
 Or bring'st thou any tidings ? for the threats  
 That herald uttered sure will be accomplished.  
 Blest in the favour of the gods, the tyrant  
 Exults, I know, and arrogantly deems  
 That he o'er Athens shall prevail ; but Jove  
 Chastises the presumptuous.

DEM. Argos comes  
 With numerous squadrons, and its king Eurystheus,  
 Myself beheld him. It behoves the man  
 Who claims the merit of an able chief,  
 Not to depend upon his spies alone  
 To mark the foe's approach. But with his host  
 He hath not yet invaded these domains,  
 But halting on yon mountain's topmost ridge  
 Observes (I from conjecture speak) the road  
 By which he may lead forth his troops to battle,  
 And where he in this realm with greatest safety  
 May station them. Already have I made  
 Each preparation to repel their onset.  
 The city is in arms, the victims stand  
 Before the altars, with their blood t' appease  
 The wrath of every god, and due lustrations  
 Are sprinkled by the seers, that o'er our foes  
 We may obtain a triumph, and preserve  
 This country. Every prophet who expounds  
 The oracles, convening, have I searched  
 Into each sage response of ancient times,  
 Or public or concealed, on which depends  
 The welfare of the realm. In all beside  
 Differ Heaven's mandates : but one dread behest

Runs through the several auspices, to Ceres  
 They bid me sacrifice some blooming maid  
 Who from a nobler sire derives her birth.  
 Zeal have I shown abundant in your cause,  
 But will not slay my daughter, nor constrain  
 Any Athenian citizen to make  
 Such an abhorred oblation: for the man  
 Exists not, who is so devoid of reason,  
 As willingly to yield his children up  
 With his own hands. But what afflicts me most  
 Is this: tumultuous crowds appear; some cry,  
 'Tis just that we the foreign suppliants aid,  
 But others blame my folly. If no means  
 Can be devised to satisfy them all,  
 Soon will a storm of civil war arise.  
 See thou to this, and think of some expedient,  
 How ye and how this country may be saved,  
 Without the citizens' calumnious tongues  
 My fame assailing. For I rule not here  
 With boundless power, like a barbarian king;  
 Let but my deeds be just, and in return  
 Shall I experience justice.

CHOR. Will not Jove  
 Suffer this city to exert its courage,  
 And aid these hapless strangers as we wish?  
 IOL. Our situation, O my sons, resembles  
 That of the mariners, who having 'scaped  
 The storm's relentless fury, when in sight  
 Of land, are from the coast by adverse winds  
 Driven back into the deep. Thus from this realm  
 Just as we reach the shore, like shipwrecked men,  
 Are we expelled. O inauspicious Hope,  
 Why didst thou soothe me with ideal joy,  
 Although it was ordained that thou should'st leave  
 Thy favours incomplete? The king deserves  
 At least to be excused, if he consent not  
 To slay his subjects' daughters; to this city  
 My praise is due, and if the gods would place me  
 In the same prosperous fortunes, from my soul  
 Your benefits should never be effaced.  
 But now, alas! no counsel can I give  
 To you, my children. Whither shall we turn?  
 What god have we neglected? To what land  
 Have we not fled for shelter? We must perish,  
 We shall be yielded up. My being doomed  
 To die, I heed but for this cause alone,  
 That by my death I shall afford delight  
 To our perfidious foes. But, O my sons,  
 For you I weep, I pity you, I pity

Alcmena, aged mother of your sire,  
 Oh, most unhappy in a life too long !  
 I too am wretched, who unnumbered toils  
 Have fruitlessly endured ; it was ordained,  
 It was ordained, alas ! that we should fall  
 Into the hands of our relentless foes,  
 And meet a shameful, miserable death.  
 Know you, what still remains for you to do,  
 On my behalf ? For all my hopes of saving  
 The children are not vanished. In their stead  
 Me to the Argive host surrender up,  
 O king, and rush not into needless danger,  
 Yet save these children. To retain a love  
 Of life becomes me not ; I yield it up  
 Without regret. It is Eurystheus' wish  
 The rather to seize me, and to expose  
 To infamy, because I was the comrade  
 Of Hercules ; for frenzy hath possessed  
 His soul. The wise man, e'en in those he hates,  
 Had rather find discretion than a want  
 Of understanding ; for a foe endued  
 With sense will pay due reverence to the vanquished.

CHOR. Forbear, old man, thus hastily to blame  
 This city ; for to us though it might prove  
 More advantageous, yet to our disgrace  
 Would it redound, should we betray our guests.

DEM. A generous, but impracticable, scheme  
 Is that thou hast proposed : for Argos' king  
 In quest of thee no squadrons hither leads.  
 What profit to Eurystheus from the death  
 Of one so old as thou art could arise ?  
 He wants to murder *these* : for to their foes  
 The rising blossoms of a noble race,  
 To whom the memory of their father's wrongs  
 Is present, must be dreadful : for all this  
 He cannot but foresee. But if thou know  
 Of any other counsel more expedient,  
 Adopt it ; for my soul hath been perplexed,  
 Since that oracular response I heard  
 Which fills me with unwelcome apprehensions.

[*Exit* DEMOPHOON.]

MACARIA, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

MAC. Deem not that I, O strangers, am too bold  
 Because I from my chamber venture forth ;  
 This is my first request : for silence, joined  
 With modesty and a domestic life,  
 Is woman's best accomplishment. I heard  
 Your groans, O Iolaus, and advanced



Though not appointed by our house to act  
 As their ambassadress ; in some degree  
 Yet am I qualified for such an office,  
 I have so great an interest in the weal  
 Of these my brothers ; on my own account  
 I also wish to hear if any ill,  
 Added to those you have already suffered,  
 Torture your soul.

IOL. Not now for the first time,  
 On thee, O daughter, most of all the children  
 Of Hercules my praise can I bestow :  
 But our ill-fated house, just as it seemed  
 Emerging from its past disgraces, sinks  
 Afresh into inextricable ruin.  
 The king informs us, that the seers, whose voice  
 Expounds the will of heaven, have signified  
 No bull nor heifer, but some blooming maid  
 Who from a noble sire derives her birth,  
 Must be the victim, if we would redeem  
 The city and ourselves from utter ruin ;  
 Here then are we perplexed : for his own children  
 He says he will not sacrifice, nor those  
 Of any of his subjects. Though to me  
 Indeed he speaks not plainly, in some sort  
 He intimates, that if we by no means  
 Can extricate ourselves from these distresses,  
 We must find out some other land to flee to,  
 For he this realm would from destruction save.

MAC. May we indulge the hope of our escape  
 Upon these terms ?

IOL. These only : in all else  
 With prosperous fortunes crowned.

MAC. No longer dread  
 The spear of Argos, for myself, old man,  
 Am ready, ere they doom me to be slain,  
 And here stand forth a voluntary victim.  
 For what could we allege on our behalf,  
 If Athens condescend to undergo  
 Dangers so great, while we who have imposed  
 These toils on others, though within our reach  
 Lie all the means of being saved, yet shrink  
 From death ? Not thus : we should provoke the laugh  
 Of universal scorn, if, with loud groans,  
 We suppliants, at the altars of the gods,  
 Should take our seats, and prove devoid of courage,  
 From that illustrious father though we spring.  
 How can the virtuous reconcile such conduct ?  
 This to our glory would forsooth redound  
 (O may it never happen !) when this city

Is taken, should we fall into the hands  
 Of our triumphant foes, when after all  
 Some noble maid reluctant must be dragged  
 To Pluto's loathed embrace. But from these realms  
 Cast forth, should I become an abject vagrant,  
 Must I not blush when any one inquires,  
 "Why came ye hither with your suppliant branches  
 Too fond of life? Retreat from these domains,  
 For we no aid to cowards will afford."  
 But if when these are dead, my single life  
 Be saved, I cannot entertain a hope  
 That I shall e'er be happy: through this motive  
 Have caused full many to betray their friends.  
 For who with a deserted maid will join,  
 Or in the bonds of wedlock, or desire  
 That I to him a race of sons should bear?  
 I therefore hold it better far to die,  
 Than to endure, without deserving them,  
 Such foul indignities, as can seem light  
 To her alone, who, from a noble race  
 Like mine, descends not: to the scene of death  
 Conduct, with garlands crown me, and prepare  
 If ye think fit, th' initiatory rites;  
 Ye hence the foe shall conquer: for this soul  
 Shrinks not with mean reluctance. I engage  
 For these my brothers, and myself, to bleed  
 A willing victim; for with ease detached  
 From life, I have imbibed this best of lessons,  
 To die with firmness in a glorious cause.

CHOR. Alas! what language shall I find, t' express  
 My admiration of the lofty speech  
 I from this virgin hear, who for her brothers  
 Resolves to die? What tongue can utter words  
 More truly generous; or what man surpass  
 Such deeds as these?

IOL. Thou art no spurious child,  
 But from the godlike seed of Hercules,  
 O daughter, dost indeed derive thy birth.  
 Although thy words are such as cannot shame,  
 Thy fate afflicts me. Yet will I propose  
 What may with greater justice be performed.  
 Together call the sisters of this maid,  
 And to atone for the whole race, let her  
 On whom th' impartial lot shall fall, be slain;  
 But without such decision 'tis not just  
 That thou should'st die.

MAC. I will not die as chance  
 The lot dispenses; for I hence should forfeit  
 All merit: name not such a scheme, old man.

If me ye will accept, and of my zeal  
 Avail yourselves, I gladly yield up life  
 Upon these terms, but stoop not to constraint.

IOL. The speech thou now hast uttered soars beyond  
 What thou at first didst say, though that was noble :  
 But thou thy former courage dost surpass  
 By this fresh instance of exalted courage,  
 The merit of thy former words, by words  
 More meritorious. Daughter, I command not,  
 Nor yet oppose thy death : for thou by dying  
 Wilt serve thy brothers.

MAC. You in cautious terms  
 Command me : fear not, lest on my account  
 You should contract pollution : for to die  
 Is my free choice. But follow me, old man,  
 For in your arms would I expire : attend,  
 And o'er my body cast the decent veil :  
 To dreadful slaughter dauntless I go forth,  
 Because I from that father spring, whose name  
 With pride I utter.

IOL. At the hour of death  
 I cannot stand beside thee.

MAC. Grant but this,  
 That when I breathe my last, I may be tended  
 By women, not by men.

IOL. It shall be thus,  
 O miserable virgin : for in me  
 'Twere base, if I neglected any rite  
 That decency enjoins, for many reasons ;  
 Because thy soul is great, because 'tis just,  
 And of all women I have ever seen,  
 Because thou art most wretched. But from these  
 And from thy aged kinsman, if thou wish  
 For aught, to me thy last behests address.

MAC. Adieu, my venerable friend, adieu !  
 Instruct these boys in every branch of wisdom,  
 And make them like yourself, they can attain  
 No higher pitch : strive to protect them still,  
 And for their sake that valued life prolong ;  
 Your children we, to you our nurture owe.  
 Me you behold, mature for bridal joys,  
 Dying to save them. But may ye, my band  
 Of brothers who are here, be blest, and gain  
 All those advantages, which to procure  
 For you, the falchion shall transpierce my breast.  
 Revere this good old man, revere Alcmena  
 Your father's aged mother, and these strangers.  
 Should ye be ever rescued from your woes,  
 Should gracious Heaven permit you to revisit

Your native land, forget not to inter,  
 With such magnificence as I deserve,  
 Your benefactress, for I have not proved  
 Deficient in attention to your welfare,  
 But die to save our family. To me  
 These monumental honours shall suffice  
 Instead of children, or the virgin state,  
 If there be aught amid the realms beneath,  
 But 'tis my wish there may not : for if grief  
 On us frail mortals also there attend,  
 I know not whither any one can turn :  
 For by the wise hath death been ever deemed  
 The most effectual cure for every ill.

IOL. O thou, distinguished by thy lofty soul,  
 Be well assured thy glory shall outshine  
 That of all other women ; both in life  
 And death, shalt thou be honoured by thy friends.  
 But ah, farewell ! for with ill-omened words  
 I tremble lest we should provoke the goddess,  
 Dread Proserpine, to whom thou now art sacred.

[*Exit* MACARIA.]

My sons I perish : grief unnerves my frame ;  
 Support and place me in the hallowed seat :  
 And, O my dearest children, o'er my face  
 Extend this garment : for I am not pleased  
 With what is done : yet, had not Heaven's response  
 Found this completion, we must all have died ;  
 For we must then have suffered greater ills  
 Than these, which are already most severe.

CHORUS.

ODE.

In just proportion, as the gods ordain,  
 Is bliss diffused through life's short span,  
 Or sorrow portioned out to man :  
 No favoured house can still maintain  
 From age to age its prosperous state,  
 For swift are the vicissitudes of fate,  
 Who now assails pride's towering crest,  
 Now makes the drooping exile blest.  
 From destiny we cannot fly ;  
 No wisdom can her shafts repel ;  
 But he who vainly dares her power defy  
 Compassed with endless toils shall dwell.  
 Ask not from Heaven with impious prayer,  
 Blessings it cannot grant to man,  
 Nor waste in misery life's short span  
 O'erwhelmed by querulous despair.

The nymph goes forth to meet a noble death,  
 Her brothers and this land to save,  
 And fame, with tributary breath  
 Shall sound her praises in the grave.  
 For dauntless virtue finds a way  
 Through labours which her progress would delay.  
 Such deeds as these, her father grace,  
 And add fresh splendour to her race,  
 But if with reverential awe thou shed  
 Over the virtuous dead  
 A tear of pity, in that tear I'll join,  
 Inspired with sentiments like thine.

SERVANT, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

SER. Ye children, hail ! but where is Iolaus,  
 That aged man ; and hath your grandame left  
 Her seat before the altar ?

IOL. Here am I,  
 If aught my presence can avail.

SER. On earth  
 Why art thou stretched, what means that downcast look ?

IOL. Domestic cares have harrowed up my soul.

SER. Lift up thy head, arise.

IOL. I am grown old,  
 And all my strength is vanished.

SER. But to thee  
 I bring most joyful tidings.

IOL. Who art thou ?  
 Where have I seen thee ? I remember not.

SER. Hyllus' attendant, canst thou not distinguish  
 These features ?

IOL. O my friend, art thou arrived  
 To snatch me from despair ?

SER. Most certainly :  
 Moreover the intelligence I bring  
 Will make thee happy.

IOL. Thee I call, come forth,  
 Alcmena, mother of a noble son,  
 And listen to these acceptable tidings :  
 Full long thy soul, for those who now approach,  
 Was torn with grief, lest they should never return.

ALC MENA, SERVANT, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

ALC. Whence with your voice resounds this echoing dome,  
 O Iolaus, is another herald  
 From Argos come, who forcibly assails you ?  
 My strength indeed is small, yet be assured  
 Of this, presumptuous stranger, while I live  
 Thou shalt not bear them hence. May I no more

Be deemed the mother of that godlike son,  
When I submit to this. But if thou dare  
To touch the children, with two aged foes  
Ignobly wilt thou strive.

IOL. Be of good cheer,  
Thou hoary matron, banish these alarms ;  
No herald with a hostile message comes  
From Argos.

ALC. Why then raised you that loud voice,  
The harbinger of fear ?

IOL. That from the temple  
Thou might'st come forth, and join us.

ALC. What you mean  
I comprehend not. Who is this ?

IOL. He tells us  
Thy grandson marches hither.

ALC. Hail, O thou  
Who bear'st these welcome tidings ? but what brings him  
To these domains ? Where is he ? What affairs  
Prevented him from coming hither with thee,  
To fill my soul with transport ?

SER. He now marshals  
The forces which attend him.

ALC. In this conference  
Am I no longer then allowed to join ?

IOL. Thou art : but 'tis my business to inquire  
Into these matters.

SER. Which of his transactions  
Say art thou most solicitous to know ?

IOL. The number of the troops he leads ?

SER. Is great,  
I cannot count them.

IOL. The Athenian chiefs  
Are sure apprized of this.

SER. They are apprized,  
And the left wing is formed.

IOL. Then the whole host  
Arrayed in arms is ready for the battle.

SER. The victims to a distance from the ranks  
Already are removed.

IOL. But at what distance  
Is the encampment of the Argive warriors ?

SER. So near that we their leader can distinguish.

IOL. What is he doing ; marshalling our foes ?

SER. This we conjecture : for I could not hear  
His voice : but I must go ; for I my lord  
Will not abandon when he nobly braves  
The dangers of the field.

IOL. I too with thee

Will join him; for the same are our intentions,  
As honour bids us, to assist our friends.

SER. Unwisely hast thou spoken.

IOL.

With my friends

Shall not I then the stubborn conflict share?

SER. That strength which erst was thine is now no more.

IOL. Can I not pierce their shields?

SER.

Thou may'st : but first,

More likely, fall thyself.

IOL.

No foe will dare

To meet me face to face.

SER.

By thy mere looks,

With that debilitated arm, no wound

Canst thou inflict.

IOL.

My presence in the field

Will to our troops give courage, and augment

Their number.

SER.

Of small service to thy friends

Will thy appearance prove.

IOL.

Detain me not :

I for some glorious action am prepared.

SER. Thou hast the will to act, but not the power

IOL. I will not be reproached for loitering here,

Say what thou wilt beside.

SER.

But without arms

How wilt thou face yon warriors sheathed in mail?

IOL. The various implements of war are lodged

Beneath these roofs ; with freedom will I use,

And if I live, return them ; if I die,

The god will not demand them back again.

Go then into the temple, and reach down

Those martial trappings from the golden nails

On which they hang, and bring them to me swiftly.

For this were infamous, while some are fighting.

If others loiter slothfully behind.

[Exit SERVANT.]

CHOR. Time hath not yet debased that lofty soul

'Tis vigorous, though thy body be decayed.

Why should'st thou enter on these fruitless toils,

Which only injure thee, and to our city

Can be of little service? on thy age

Should'st thou reflect, and lay aside attempts

That are impossible, for by no arts

The long-lost force of youth canst thou regain.

ALC. What schemes are these? distempered in your mind,

Me and my children mean you to abandon?

IOL. The battle is man's province : to thy care

Them I consign.

ALC.

But if you die, what means

Have I of being saved?

IOL. The tender care  
Of the surviving children of thy son.

ALC. Should they too meet with some severe mishap,  
Which may the gods forbid.

IOL. These generous strangers  
Will not betray thee ; banish every fear.

ALC. In them I trust : I have no other friend.

IOL. Jove too, I know, is mindful of thy toils.

ALC. I will not speak in disrespectful terms  
Of Jove: but whether he his plighted troth  
Have kept, full well he knows.

SER. [*returning.*] Thou here behold'st  
The brazen panoply, now haste to sheathe  
Thy limbs in mail ; the battle is at hand,  
And Mars detests a loiterer : if thou fear  
Accoutrements so ponderous, to the field  
Advance disarmed, nor till thou join the ranks  
Wear these unwieldly trappings ; for meantime  
I in my hands their burden will sustain.

IOL. Well hast thou spoken ; with those arms attend me  
Ready for the encounter, place a spear  
In my right hand, and under my left arm  
Hold me, and guide my steps.

SER. Shall I conduct  
A warrior like a child ?

IOL. I must tread sure,  
Else 'twere an evil omen.

SER. Would thy power  
Equalled thy zeal.

IOL. Haste: greatly 'twill afflict me  
If, left behind, I cannot join the fray.

SER. Slow are thy steps, and hence thou deem'st I move not.

IOL. Behold'st thou not the swiftness of my pace ?

SER. Thou to thyself I see appear'st to hasten,  
Although thou gain'st no ground.

IOL. When in the field  
Thou seest me, thou wilt own I speak the truth.

SER. What great exploit achieving ? I could wish  
That thou might'st prove victorious.

IOL. Through his shield  
Some foe transfixing.

SER. We at length may reach  
Th' embattled plain, but this I greatly fear.

IOL. Ah, would to heaven, that thou, my withered arm,  
Again wert vigorous, as in former days  
Thee I remember, when thou didst lay waste  
The Spartan realms with Hercules ; thus fight  
My battles now, and singly will I triumph  
Over Eurystheus, for that dastard fears



To face the dangers of th' embattled field :  
 Too apt in our ideas to unite  
 Valour with wealth, yet to the prosperous man  
 Superior wisdom falsely we ascribe.

[*Exit* IOLAUS and SERVANT.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

O fostering Earth, resplendent Moon,  
 Who gladd'st the dreary shades of night,  
 And thou, enthroned at broadest noon,  
 Hyperion, 'midst exhaustless light,  
 To me propitious tidings bring,  
 Raise to the skies a festive sound.  
 And waft the gladsome notes around,  
 Till, from the palace of our king,  
 They echo through Minerva's fane :  
 My house, my country, to maintain  
 Against the ruthless spoiler's pride,  
 Menaced because this realm extends  
 Protection to its suppliant friends,  
**I** with the sword our contest will decide.

I. 2.

Although there seem just cause for dread,  
 When cities like Mycene blest,  
 Whose triumphs fame hath widely spread  
 Enter this region to invest  
 Our bulwarks, harbouring ruthless hate.  
 Think, O my country, think what shame,  
 Should we reject the suppliant's claim  
 Appalled by Argos' haughty state.  
 Resistless Jove shall aid the spear  
 I brandish unappalled by fear ;  
 The tribute of eternal praise  
 From all that breathe, to him is due :  
 Nor magnified by our weak view  
 Shall men above the gods their trophies raise.

II. 1.

Descend with venerable mien,  
 O thou our guardian and our queen,  
 For on thy fostering soil we stand,  
 These walls were reared by thy command,

Drive from our menaced gates the lawless host,  
 Suppress that Argive tyrant's boast ;  
 For if by you unaided, is this hand  
 Too weak their fury to withstand.

11. 2.

Thee, O Minerva, we adore,  
 Thy altar ever streams with gore :  
 We on each moon's concluding day  
 To thee our public homage pay ;  
 Through every fane harmonious numbers sound,  
 Sweet minstrelsy then breathes around,  
 And th' echoing hills their nightly dance repeat  
 As the nymphs move with agile feet.

SERVANT, ALCMENA, CHORUS.

SER. O royal dame, the message that to you  
 I bring, is both concise, and what reflects  
 On me abundant glory to relate,  
 In fight have we prevailed, and trophies reared  
 On which the armour of your foes is hung.

ALC. This day hath brought thee hither, O my friend,  
 Thy freedom for such tidings to receive :  
 But one anxiety there still remains  
 To which thou leav'st me subject ; much I fear  
 For the important lives of those I love.

SER. They live, and have obtained from all the host  
 The greatest fame.

ALC. And Iolaus too,  
 My aged friend ?

SER. Yet more, he hath performed  
 Through the peculiar favour of the gods  
 Exploits most memorable.

ALC. What glorious deed  
 Hath he achieved in fight ?

SER. From an old man,  
 He is grown young again.

ALC. Thou speak'st of things  
 Most wonderful. But first, how fought our friends  
 With such success, I wish thee to inform me.

SER. All that hath passed, at once will I relate  
 When, to each other in the field opposed,  
 We had arranged both armies, and spread forth  
 The van of battle to its full extent,  
 Hyllus alighting from his chariot, stood  
 In the midway 'twixt either host, and cried :  
 " Thou leader of the Argive troops, who com'st  
 With hostile fury to invade this land,  
 Thy interests recommend what I propose,

Nor can Mycene suffer from the loss  
If thou deprive her of a single warrior ;  
Therefore with me encounter hand to hand,  
And if thou slay me, seize and bear away  
The sons of Hercules ; but if thou die,  
My palace and hereditary rank  
Permit me to enjoy." The troops assented,  
And praised what he had spoken as the means  
Of finishing their labours, and a proof  
Of his exalted courage. But Eurystheus  
Unmoved by reverence for th' assembled host  
Who heard the challenge, and with terror smitten,  
Forgot the general's part, nor dared to face  
The lifted spear, but acted like a dastard :  
Yet he who was thus destitute of courage  
Came to enslave the sons of Hercules.  
Hyllus again retreated to his rank ;  
The prophets too, when they perceived no peace  
Could be effected by a single combat,  
Without delay the blooming virgin slew,  
Auspicious victim, from whose pallid lips  
Her trembling spirit fled. The lofty car  
Some mounted, o'er their sides while others flung  
Their bucklers to protect them. To his host,  
Meantime the king of Athens, in a strain  
Worthy of his exalted courage, spoke :  
" Ye citizens, the land to which ye owe  
Your nourishment and birth, now claims your aid."  
Equally loth to sully the renown  
Of Argos and Mycene, in like terms  
The foe besought his partners of the war  
Their utmost vigour to exert. No sooner  
Had the loud signal by Etruria's trump  
Been given, than they in thickest battle joined,  
Think with what crash their brazen shields resounded,  
What groans and intermingled shouts were heard !  
First through our lines the host of Argos burst,  
And in their turn gave way : then foot to foot,  
And man to man opposed, in stubborn conflict  
We all persisted : multitudes were slain ;  
But in this language either chief his troops  
Encouraged : " O ye citizens of Athens,  
O ye who till the fruitful Argive field,  
Will ye not from your native land repel  
The foul disgrace ?" But with our utmost efforts  
Scarcely could we put to flight the Argive host.  
When Iolaus saw young Hyllus break  
The ranks of battle, he with lifted hands  
Entreated him to place him in his car,

Then seized the reins, and onward in pursuit  
 Of the swift coursers of Eurystheus drove.  
 As to the sequel ; from report alone  
 Let others speak, I tell what I have seen :  
 While through Pallènè's streets he passed, where rise  
 Minerva's altars, soon as he descried  
 The chariot of Eurystheus, he a prayer  
 Addressed to blooming Hebe, and to Jove,  
 That for that single day he might recover  
 The pristine vigour of his youth, and punish  
 His foes as they deserve. You now shall hear  
 What a miraculous event ensued ;  
 Two stars 'bove Iolaus' chariot stood,  
 And overshadowed it with gloomy clouds,  
 Which, by the wise 'tis said, were Hercules  
 Your son, and blooming Hebe : from that mist  
 Which veiled the skies, the chief grown young again,  
 Displayed his vigorous arms, and near the rocks  
 Of Scyron, seized Eurystheus in his car.  
 Binding his hands with chains, he hither brings  
 The Argive tyrant, a distinguished prize,  
 Who once was happy ; but on all mankind  
 Loudly inculcates by his present fortunes  
 This lesson : not too rashly to ascribe  
 Felicity to him who in appearance  
 Is prosperous, but to wait till we behold  
 His close of life ; for fortune day by day  
 Doth waver.

CHOR.      Thou great author of success,  
 O Jove, at length am I allowed to view  
 The day, by which my terrors are dispelled.

ALC. 'Twas late indeed, when thou, O Jove, didst look  
 On my afflictions ; yet am I to thee  
 Most grateful for the kindness thou hast shown me.  
 And though I erst believed not that my son  
 Dwells with the gods, I clearly know it now.  
 Now, O my children, ye from all your toils  
 Shall be set free, and of Eurystheus, doomed  
 With shame to perish, burst the galling yoke,  
 Behold your father's city, the rich fields  
 Of your inheritance again possess,  
 And sacrifice to your paternal gods,  
 From whom excluded, in a foreign land  
 Ye led a wandering miserable life.  
 But with what sage design yet undisclosed,  
 Hath Iolaus spared Eurystheus' life,  
 Inform me : for to us it seems unwise  
 Not to avenge our wrongs when we have caught  
 Our enemies.

SER.           He through respect to you  
 Hath acted thus, that you might see the tyrant  
 Vanquished, and rendere'd subject to your power.  
 Not by his own consent, but in the yoke  
 Bound by necessity; for he was loth  
 To come into your presence, ere he bleed,  
 And suffer as he merits. But farewell,  
 O venerable matron, and remember  
 The promise you first made when I began  
 These tidings, and, oh, set me free: for nought  
 But truth should from ingenuous lips proceed.

[Exit SERVANT.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

To me the choral song is sweet,  
 When the shrill flute and genial banquet meet,  
 If Venus also grace the festive board;  
     I taste a more refined delight  
 Now I behold my friends (transporting sight!)  
 To unexpected happiness restored.  
 For in this nether world, eventful Fate,  
 And Saturn's offspring Time, full many a change create.

I. 2.

Follow the plain and beaten way,  
 From Justice, O my country, never stray,  
 Nor cease the powers immortal to revere.  
     To heights scarce short of frenzy rise  
 The errors of that mortal, who denies  
 Assent to truths confirmed by proofs so clear.  
 Jove's power by signal judgments is descried,  
 Oit as his vengeance blasts the towering crest of pride.

II. 1.

In heavenly mansions with the blest,  
 Thy son, O venerable dame, doth rest;  
 He hath confuted those invidious tales,  
     That to loathed Pluto's house he came  
 Soon as he perished in that dreadful flame:  
 He under roofs of burnished gold regales,  
 On the soft couch of lovely Hebe placed;  
 Them two, both sprung from Jove, O Hymen, thou hast  
     graced.

## II. 2.

Events, which strike man's wondering eyes,  
 From a variety of causes rise.  
 For fame relates how Pallas saved the sire,  
 And from her city far renowned,  
 Her race, protection have the children found;  
 She hath suppressed th' o'erweening tyrant's ire,  
 Whose violence no laws could ere control;  
 Curse on such boundless pride, that fever of the soul.

MESSENGER, EURYSTHEUS, ALCMENA, CHORUS.

MES. Your eyes indeed behold, O royal dame,  
 Yet shall this tongue declare that we have brought  
 Eurytheus hither, unexpected sight,  
 Reverse of fortune his presumptuous soul  
 Foresaw not, this oppressor little deemed  
 That he should ever fall into your hands,  
 When from Mycene, by the Cyclops' toil  
 Erected, he those squadrons led, and hoped  
 With pride o'erweening to lay Athens waste;  
 But Heaven our situation hath reversed:  
 And therefore with exulting Hyllus joins  
 The valiant Iolaus, in erecting  
 Trophies to Jove the author of our conquest.  
 But they to you commanded me to lead  
 This captive, wishing to delight your soul:  
 For 'tis most grateful to behold a foe  
 Fall'n from the height of gay prosperity.

ALC. Com'st thou, detested wretch? at length hath Justice  
 O'ertaken thee? First hither turn thy head,  
 And dare to face thine enemies: for, dwindled  
 Into a vassal, thou no longer rul'st.  
 Art thou the man (for I would know the truth)  
 Who didst presume to heap unnumbered wrongs,  
 Thou author of all mischief, on my son  
 While yet he lived, wherever now resides  
 His dauntless spirit? For in what one instance  
 Didst thou not injure him? At thy command,  
 Alive he travelled to th' infernal shades;  
 Thou sent'st, and didst commission him to slay  
 Hydras and lions. Various other mischiefs,  
 Which were by thee contrived, I mention not,  
 For an attempt to speak of them at large  
 Would be full tedious. Nor was it enough  
 For thee to venture on these wrongs alone,  
 But thou, moreover, from each Grecian state  
 Me and these children hast expelled, though seated  
 As suppliants at the altars of the gods,

Confounding those whose locks are grey through age  
 With tender infants. But thou here hast found  
 Those who were men indeed, and a free city  
 Which feared thee not. Thou wretchedly shalt perish,  
 And pay this bitter usury to atone  
 For all thy crimes, whose number is so great  
 That it were just thou more than once shouldst die.

MES. You must not kill him.

ALC. Then have we in vain  
 Taken him captive. But what law forbids  
 His being slain?

MES. The rulers of this land  
 Consent not.

ALC. Is it not by them esteemed  
 A glorious action to despatch our foes?

MES. Not such as they have seized alive in battle.

ALC. Is Hyllus satisfied with this decree?

MES. He, in my judgment, will forsooth act rightly,  
 If he oppose what Athens shall enjoin.

ALC. The captive tyrant ill deserves to live,  
 Or longer view the sun.

MES. In this first instance  
 They did amiss, when by their swords he died not.

ALC. Is it not just that he should suffer still?

MES. He who will slay him is not to be found.

ALC. What shall I say if some adventurous hand——

MES. If you do this, you will incur great censure.

ALC. I love this city, I confess : but no man,  
 Since he is fall'n into my power, shall force  
 This prisoner from me : let them call me bold  
 And more presumptuous than becomes a woman,  
 I am resolved to execute my purpose.

MES. Full well I know the hatred which you bear  
 To this unhappy man is terrible,  
 And such as merits pardon.

EUR. Be convinced  
 Of this, O woman, that I cannot flatter,  
 Nor to preserve this wretched life say aught,  
 Whence they may brand me with a dastard's name.  
 For I with much reluctance undertook  
 This contest ; near in blood am I to thee,  
 And of that race whence sprung thy son Alcides.  
 But whether I consented, or was loth,  
 Me Juno caused by her immortal power  
 To harbour this dire frenzy in my breast.  
 Since I became his foe, since I resolved  
 Upon this strife, much mischief I devised,  
 And brooded o'er it many a tedious night,  
 That after I had wearied out and slain

Those I abhorred, I might no longer lead  
 A life of fear : for well I knew thy son  
 Was no mere cipher, but a man indeed :  
 Though strong my hate, on him will I confer  
 The praise he merits from his valiant deeds.  
 But after he was dead, was I not forced,  
 Because I was a foe to these his sons,  
 And knew what bitter enmity 'gainst me  
 They from their sire inherited, to leave  
 No stone unturned, to slay, to banish them,  
 And plot their ruin ? Could I have succeeded  
 In these designs, my throne had stood secure.  
 If thou my prosperous station hadst obtained,  
 Wouldst thou not have attempted to hunt down  
 The lion's whelps, instead of suffering them  
 At Argos unmolested to reside ?  
 Thou canst prevail on no man to give credit  
 To such assertions : therefore, since my foes  
 Forbore to slay me, when prepared to lose  
 My life in battle, by the laws of Greece,  
 If I now die, my blood will fix a stain  
 Of lasting guilt on him who murders me.  
 This city hath discreetly spared my life,  
 More influenced by its reverence for the gods  
 Than by the hatred which to me it bears.  
 My answer to the charges thou hast urged  
 Against me, having heard, esteem me now  
 A suppliant, and though wretched, still a king,  
 For such is my condition : though to die  
 I wish not, yet can I without regret  
 Surrender up my life.

CHOR. To you, Alcmena,  
 A little wholesome counsel would I give,  
 This captive monarch to release, since such  
 The pleasure of the city.

ALC. If he die,  
 And to the mandates of th' Athenian realm  
 I still submit, what mischief can ensue ?

CHOR. 'Twere best of all. But how can these two things  
 Be reconciled ?

ALC. I will inform you how  
 This may with ease be done. I, to his friends,  
 When slain will yield him up, and with this land  
 Comply in the disposal of his corse :  
 But he shall die to sate my just revenge.

EUR. Destroy me if thou wilt ; to thee I sue not :  
 But on this city, since it spared my life  
 Through pious reverence, and forbore to slay me,  
 Will I bestow an ancient oracle



Of Phœbus, which in future times shall prove  
 More advantageous than ye now suppose ;  
 For after death, so have the Fates decreed,  
 My corse shall ye inter before the temple  
 Of the Pallenian maid : to you a friend  
 And guardian of your city, shall I rest  
 Beneath this soil for ever ; but a foe  
 To those who spring from this detested race  
 When with their armies they invade this land  
 Requiting with ingratitude your kindness :  
 Such strangers ye protect. But thus forewarned,  
 Why came I hither ? Through a fond belief  
 That Juno was with far superior power  
 To each oracular response endued,  
 And that my cause she ne'er would have betrayed.  
 On me waste no libations, nor let gore  
 Be poured forth on the spot of my interment,  
 For I to punish these their impious deeds,  
 Will cause them with dishonour to return :  
 From me shall ye receive a double gain,  
 For you I will assist, and prove to them  
 Most baneful e'en in death.

ALC.

Why are ye loth

To slay this man, if what ye hear be true,  
 That welfare to this city hence will spring,  
 And your prosperity ? For he points out  
 The safest road. Alive he is a foe,  
 But after he is dead will prove a friend.  
 Ye servants bear him hence, and to the dogs  
 Cast forth without delay his breathless corse :  
 Think not, presumptuous wretch, that thou shalt live  
 Again t' expel me from my native land.

CHOR. With this am I well pleased. My followers, go.  
 For hence in our king's sight shall we stand guiltless.



# R H E S U S.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

CHORUS OF TROJAN

SENTINELS.

HECTOR.

ÆNEAS.

DOLON.

A SHEPHERD.

RHESUS.

ULYSSES.

DIOMEDE.

PARIS.

MINERVA.

THE MUSE.

THE CHARIOTEER OF

RHESUS.

SCENE.—BEFORE HECTOR'S TENT AT THE GATES OF TROY.

## CHORUS, HECTOR.

CHOR. Let some swift sentinel to Hector's tent  
Go and inquire if any messenger  
Be yet arrived, who recent tidings bears  
From those, who during the fourth nightly watch  
Are by the host deputed. On your arm  
Sustain your head, unfold those low'ring eyelids,  
And from your lowly couch of withered leaves,  
O Hector, rise, for it is time to listen.

HEC. Who comes? art thou a friend? pronounce the watch-  
word.

Who are ye, that by night approach my bed?  
Speak out.

CHOR. We guard the camp.

HEC. Why com'st thou hither  
With this tumultuous haste?

CHOR. Be of good cheer.

HEC. I am. Hast thou discovered in the camp  
This night some treachery?

CHOR. None.

HEC. Why then deserting  
The post where thou art stationed, dost thou rouse  
The troops, unless thou through this midnight gloom  
Bring some important tidings? know'st thou not  
That near the Argive host we under arms  
Take our repose.

CHOR. Prepare your brave allies :  
 Go to their chambers, bid them wield the spear.  
 Rouse them from slumber, and despatch your friends  
 To your own troop ; caparison the steeds.  
 Who bears the swift alarm to Pantheus' son ?  
 Who to Europa's offspring, Lycia's chief ?  
 Where are the priests who should inspect the victims ?  
 Who leads the light-armed squadron to the field ?  
 And where are Phrygia's archers ? Let each bow  
 Be strung.

HEC. Thy tidings are in part alarming,  
 In part thou giv'st us courage, though thou speak  
 Nought plainly. By the terrifying scourge  
 Of Pan hast thou been smitten, that thou leav'st  
 Thy station to alarm the host ? Explain  
 These clamorous sounds. What tidings shall I say  
 Thou bring'st ? Thy words are many, but their drift  
 I comprehend not.

CHOR. All night long, O Hector,  
 The Grecian camp hath kindled fires, the torches  
 Amid their fleet are blazing, and the host  
 Tumultuous rush to Agamemnon's tent,  
 At midnight calling on the king t' assemble  
 A council : for the sailors never yet  
 Were thus alarmed. But I, because I fear  
 What may ensue, these tidings hither bring,  
 Lest you should charge me with a breach of duty.

HEC. Full seasonably thou com'st, although thou speak  
 Words fraught with terror : for these dastards hope  
 They in their barks shall from this shore escape  
 Ere I discover them : their kindled fires  
 Prove this suspicion. Thou, O partial Jove,  
 Hast robbed me of my triumph, like the prey  
 Torn from the lion, ere I have destroyed  
 With this avenging spear the Grecian host.  
 Had not the sun withdrawn his radiant beams,  
 I the successful battle had prolonged  
 Till I had burnt their ships, and hewn a way  
 Through their encampments, and in slaughter drenched  
 My bloody hand. I would have fought by night  
 And taken my advantage of the gales  
 Sent by auspicious fortune : but the wise,  
 And seers who knew the will of Heaven, advised me  
 To wait but till to-morrow's dawn appeared,  
 And then sweep every Grecian from the land.  
 But now no longer will they stay to prove  
 The truth of what my prophets have foretold :  
 For cowards in the midnight gloom are brave.  
 Instantly therefore through the host proclaim

These orders : " Take up arms, and rouse from sleep ; "  
Pierced through the back as to the ships he flies,  
So shall full many a dastard with his gore  
Distain the steep ascent ; the rest fast bound  
In galling chains shall learn to till our fields.

CHOR. O Hector, ere you learn the real fact,  
You are too hasty : for we know not yet  
That they are flying.

HEC. Wherefore then by night  
Are those fires kindled through the Grecian camp ?

CHOR. I am not certain, though my soul full strongly  
Suspects the cause.

HEC. If thou fear this, thou tremblest  
At a mere shadow.

CHOR. Such a light ne'er blazed  
Before among the foes.

HEC. Nor such defeat  
In battle, did they e'er till now experience.

CHOR. This have you done ; look now to what remains.

HEC. I give this short direction : take up arms  
Against the foe.

CHOR. Behold ! Æneas comes :  
Sure, from his haste, some tidings, which deserve  
His friends' attentive ear, the warrior brings.

ÆNEAS, HECTOR, CHORUS.

ÆNE. What mean the watch, O Hector, who by night  
Were to their stations in the camp assigned,  
That they, with terror smitten, at your chamber  
In a nocturnal council have assembled ?  
And why is the whole army thus in motion ?

HEC. Put on thy arms, Æneas.

ÆNE. What hath happened ?  
Are you informed that in this midnight gloom  
The foe hath formed some stratagem ?

HEC. They fly !  
They mount their ships.

ÆNE. What proof have you of this ?

HEC. All night their torches blaze ; to me they seem  
As if they would not wait to-morrow's dawn :  
But, kindling fires upon their lofty decks,  
They sure fly homeward from this hostile land.

ÆNE. But why, if it be thus, prepare your troops  
For battle ?

HEC. As they mount the deck, this spear  
Shall overtake the dastards ; I their flight  
Will harass : for 'twere base, and prejudicial  
As well as base, when Heaven delivers up

The foe into our hands, to suffer those  
Who wronged us to escape without a conflict.

ÆNE. Ah ! would to Heaven you equally stood foremost  
In wisdom, as in courage : but one man  
By bounteous Nature never was endued  
With knowledge universal : various gifts  
Doth she dispense, to you the warrior's palm,  
To others sapient counsels : now you hear  
Their torches blaze, you thence infer the Greeks  
Are flying, and would lead the troops by night  
Over the trenches : but when you have passed  
The yawning fosse, should you perceive the foes  
Instead of flying from the land, resist,  
With dauntless courage, your protended spear,  
If you are vanquished, to these sheltering walls  
You never can return : for in their flight  
How shall the troops o'er slanting palisades  
Escape, or, how the charioteer direct  
Over the narrow bridge his crashing wheels ?  
If you prevail, you have a foe at hand,  
The son of Peleus, from your flaming torches  
Who will protect the fleet, nor suffer you  
Utterly to destroy the Grecian host  
As you expect ; for he is brave. Our troops  
Let us then leave to rest from martial toils,  
And sleep beside their shields. That we despatch  
Amid the foe some voluntary spy,  
Is my advice : if they prepare for flight,  
Let us assail the Greeks ; but if those fires  
Are kindled to ensnare us, having learned  
The enemy's intentions, let us hold  
A second council on this great emprise.  
Illustrious chief, I have declared my thoughts.

CHORUS.

I.

These counsels I approve : thy wayward scheme,  
O Hector, change, and think the same :  
For perilous commands I deem,  
Given by the headstrong chief, deserve our blame.  
Why send not to the fleet a spy,  
Who may approach the trenches, and descry  
With what intent our foes upon the strand  
Have kindled many a flaming brand ?

HEC. Ye have prevailed, because ye all concur  
In one opinion : but depart, prepare  
Thy fellow-soldiers, for perhaps the host

May by the rumours of our nightly council  
 Be put in motion. I will send a spy  
 Among the Greeks ; and if we learn what schemes  
 They have devised, the whole of my intentions  
 To thee will I immediately reveal  
 In person. With confusion and dismay  
 But if the foe precipitate their flight,  
 Give ear, and follow where the clanging trump  
 Summons thee forth, for then I cannot wait,  
 But will this night attack the Grecian host,  
 Storm their entrenchments, and destroy their fleet.

ÆNE. Despatch the messenger without delay.

For you now think discreetly, and in me  
 Shall find, when needed, in your bold emprise  
 A firm associate.

[Exit ÆNEAS.]

HEC. What brave Trojan, present.  
 At this our conference, as a spy will go  
 T' explore the Grecian navy ? to this land  
 What generous benefactor will arise ?  
 Who answers ? for I singly cannot serve  
 The cause of Troy and its confederate bands  
 In every station.

DOL. For my native realm,  
 Facing this danger, to the fleet of Greece  
 I as a spy will go ; and when I've searched  
 Into the progress of our foes, return :  
 But I on these conditions undertake  
 The toilsome enterprise——

HEC. Thou well deserv'st  
 Thy name, and to thy country art a friend,  
 O Dolon ; for this day thy father's house,  
 Which is already noble, thou exalt'st  
 With double fame.

DOL. I therefore ought to strive :  
 But after all my labours let me reap  
 A suitable reward. If gain arise  
 From the performance of the task enjoined,  
 We feel a twofold joy.

HEC. This were but just :  
 I contradict thee not : name thy reward ;  
 Choose what thou wilt, except the rank I bear.

DOL. Your rich domains I wish not to possess.

HEC. To thee a daughter of imperial Priam  
 In marriage shall be given.

DOL. With my superiors  
 I will not wed.

HEC. Abundant gold is ours,  
 If thou prefer this stipend.

DOL. My own house

With wealth is furnished, I am far remote  
From want.

HEC. What then dost thou desire that Troy  
Contains?

DOL. When you have conquered the proud Greeks,  
Promise to give me——

HEC. I will give thee all  
That thou canst ask, except my royal captives.

DOL. Slay them; I seek not to withhold your arm  
From cutting off the vanquished Menelaus.

HEC. Is it thy wish, Oileus' son to thee  
Should be consigned?

DOL. The hands of princes, nurtured  
Effeminately, are not formed to till  
The stubborn soil.

HEC. From which of all the Greeks  
Taken alive wouldst thou receive his ransom?

DOL. Already have I told you, that at home  
I have abundant riches.

HEC. Thou shalt choose  
Among our spoils.

DOL. For offerings let them hang  
High in the temples of the gods.

HEC. What gift  
Greater than these canst thou from me require?

DOL. Achilles' steeds: for when I stake my life  
On Fortune's die, 'twere reasonable to strive  
For such an object as deserves my toils.

HEC. Although thou in thy wishes to possess  
Those steeds hast interiered with me: for sprung  
From an immortal race themselves immortal  
They bear Pelides through the ranks of war,  
Neptune, 'tis said, the king of ocean, tamed them  
And gave to Peleus: I, who prompted thee  
To this emprise, will not bely thy hopes,  
But to adorn thy noble father's house,  
On thee Achilles' generous steeds bestow.

DOL. This claims my gratitude: if I succeed,  
My courage will for me obtain a palm,  
Such as no Phrygian ever won before:  
Nor should you envy me, for joys unnumbered  
And the first station in the realm, are yours.

[Exit HECTOR.]

CHORUS.

II.

The danger's great, but great rewards allure  
Thee, generous youth, t' assert thy claim,  
Thrice blest if thou the gift procure,  
Yet will thy toils deserve immortal fame:





Through mazes undiscovered by our foes ;  
 Aid thy loved Dardanian line,  
 For matchless strength was ever thine,  
 Constructed by thy hand Troy's ancient bulwarks rose.

## I. 2.

Speed Dolon's journey to the Grecian fleet,  
 Let him espy th' entrenchments of their host ;  
 Again in triumph from the stormy coast  
 Conduct the warrior to his native seat ;  
     May he mount that chariot drawn  
     By steeds that browsed the Phthian lawn  
 When our brave lord, the Mars of Greece, hath slain ;  
     Coursers of unrivalled speed,  
     Which erst to Eacus' seed  
 To Peleus, Neptune gave who rules the billowy main.

## II. 1.

His country, his paternal walls, to save,  
 The generous youth explores the anchored fleet :  
 From me such worth shall due encomiums meet.  
 How few with hardy bosoms stem the wave,  
     When Hyperion veils his face,  
     And cities tremble on their base !  
 At this dread crisis Phrygian heroes rise,  
     Mysian chiefs, uncurbed by fear,  
     Brandish with nervous arm the spear ,  
 Curst be the lying tongue that slanders my allies.

## II. 2.

In savage guise now Dolon stalks arrayed,  
 With step adventurous o'er the hostile ground :  
 What Grecian chief shall feel the deadly wound,  
 While the wolf's hide conceals his glittering blade ?  
     Weltering first in crimson gore,  
     May Menelaus rise no more ;  
 Next may the victor, Agamemnon's head  
     Bear to Helen, stung with grief  
     At her affinity to that famed chief  
 Who in a thousand ships to Troy his squadrons led.

## A SHEPHERD, HECTOR, CHORUS.

SHEP. Most gracious monarch, may I ever greet  
 My lords with tidings such as now I bring !  
 HEC. Full oft misapprehension clouds the soul  
 Of simple rustics : to thy lord in arms  
 Thou of thy fleecy charge art come to speak

At this unseemly crisis : know'st thou not  
My mansion, or the palace of my sire ?  
There ought'st thou to relate how fare thy flock.

SHEP. We shepherds are, I own, a simple race,  
Yet my intelligence deserves attention.

HEC. Such fortunes as befall the fold, to me  
Relate not, for I carry in this hand  
The battle and the spear.

SHEP. I too am come  
Such tidings to unfold ; for a brave chief,  
Your friend, the leader of a numerous host,  
Marches to fight the battles of this realm.

HEC. But from what country ?

SHEP. Thrace, and he is called  
The son of Strymon.

HEC. Didst thou say, that Rhesus  
Hath entered Ilion's fields ?

SHEP. You comprehend me,  
And have anticipated half my speech.

HEC. Why doth he travel over Ida's hill,  
Deserting that broad path where loaded wains  
With ease might move ?

SHEP. I have no certain knowledge ;

Yet may we form conjectures ; 'tis a scheme  
Most prudent, with his host to march by night  
Because he hears the plain with hostile bands  
Is covered : but us rustics he alarmed,  
Who dwell on Ida's mount, the ancient seat  
Of Ilion's first inhabitants, by night

When through that wood, the haunt of savage beasts  
The warrior trod : for with a mighty shout  
The Thracian host rushed on, but we, our flocks,  
With terror smitten, to the summit drove,  
Lest any Greek should come to seize the prey.

And waste your crowded stalls : till we discovered  
Voices so different from the Hellenian tribes,  
That we no longer feared them. I advanced,

And in the Thracian language made inquiry  
Of the king's vanguard, as they moved along  
To explore a passage for the host, what name  
Their leader bore, sprung from what noble sire,  
To Ilion's walls he came, the friend of Priam.

When I had heard each circumstance I wished  
To know, I for a time stood motionless,

And saw majestic Rhesus, like a god,  
High in his chariot, drawn by Thracian steeds  
Whiter than snow, a golden beam confine i

Their necks, and o'er his shoulders hung a shield  
Adorned with sculptures wrought in massive gold :

Like that which in Minerva's *Ægis* flames,  
 Bound on the courser's front, a brazen Gorgon  
 Tinkled incessant with alarming sound.  
 The numbers of an army so immense  
 I cannot calculate; the horse were many,  
 Many the ranks of troops with bucklers armed,  
 And archers; and a countless multitude,  
 Like infantry in Thracian vests arrayed  
 Brought up the rear. Such is th' ally who comes  
 On Troy's behalf to combat; nor by flight,  
 Nor by withstanding his protended spear,  
 Can *Peleus'* son escape him.

CHOR. When the gods  
 Are to a realm propitious, each event  
 Is easily converted into bliss.

HEC. Since I in battle prosper, and since *Jove*  
 Is on our side, I shall have many friends;  
 But those we need not who in former time  
 Our toils partook not, with malignant blast  
 When on the sails of *Ilion* *Mars* had breathed.  
*Rhesus* hath shown too plainly what a friend  
 He is to *Troy*, for to the feast he comes,  
 Yet was he absent when the hunters seized  
 Their prey, nor did he share the toils of war.

CHOR. You justly scorn such friends; yet, O receive  
 Those who would aid the city.

HEC. We who long  
 Have guarded *Ilion* can defend it now.

CHOR. Are you persuaded you have gained already  
 A triumph o'er the foes?

HEC. I am persuaded,  
 And when to-morrow's sun the heaven ascends  
 This shall be proved.

CHOR. Beware of what may happen;  
*Jove* oft o'erthrows the prosperous.

HEC. I abhor  
 These tardy succours.

SHEP. O, my lord, 'twere odious,  
 Should you reject with scorn the proffered aid  
 Of our allies: the sight of such a host  
 Will strike the foe with terror.

CHOR. Since he comes  
 But as a guest, not partner in the war,  
 Let him approach your hospitable board,  
 For little thanks are due from *Priam's* sons  
 To such confederates.

HEC. Prudent are thy counsels,  
 Thou too hast rightly judged: and in compliance  
 With what the messenger hath said, let *Rhesus*

Refulgent in his golden arms draw near,  
For Ilion shall receive him as her friend.

[Exit SHEPHERD.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Daughter of Jove, forbear to wreak  
Impending vengeance, though the tongue,  
O Nemesis, its boastful strain prolong :  
I the free dictates of my soul will speak,  
Thou com'st, brave son of that illustrious spring,  
Thou com'st thrice welcome to our social hail :  
At length doth thy Pierian mother bring  
Her favoured child, while lingering in his fall,  
Adorned by many a bridge, thee with paternal call

I. 2.

Doth Strymon summon to the field : of yore  
When he the tuneful Muse addressed,  
A gliding stream he sought her snowy breast.  
Thee, lovely youth, the yielding goddess bore :  
To us thou com'st a tutelary power  
Yoking thy coursers to the fervid car :  
O Phrygia ! O my country ! at this hour  
Hastes thy deliverer glittering from afar,  
Him may'st thou call thy Jove, thy thunderbolt of war.

II. 1.

While swiftly glides th' unheeded day,  
Again shall Troy without control  
Chant the young loves, and o'er the foaming bowl  
The sportive contest urge 'midst banquets gay ;  
But Atreus' sons desponding cross the wave,  
And sail from Ilion to the Spartan strand.  
Accomplish what thy friends foretold, O save  
These menaced walls by thy victorious hand,  
Return with laurels crowned, and bless thy native land.

II. 2.

To dazzle fierce Pelides' sight,  
Before him wave thy golden shield  
Obliquely raised, that meteor of the field,  
Vault from thy chariot with unrivalled might,  
And brandish with each dexterous hand a lance ;  
Whoever strives with thee shall ne'er return  
To Argive faves, and join Saturnia's dance,  
He by the spear of Thrace in combat slain,  
Shall lie a breathless corse on Troy's exulting plain.

Hail, mighty chief! ye Thracian realms, the mien  
 Of him ye bore speaks his exalted rank.  
 Observe those nervous limbs with plated gold  
 Incased, and hearken to those tinkling chains  
 Which on his shield are hung. A god, O Troy,  
 E'en Mars himself, from Strymon's current sprung,  
 And from the Muse, brings this auspicious gale.

RHESUS, HECTOR, CHORUS.

RHE. Thou brave descendant of a noble sire,  
 Lord of this realm, O Hector, I accost thee  
 After a tedious absence, and rejoice  
 In thy success, for to the turrets reared  
 By Greece, thou now lay'st siege, and I am come  
 With thee those hostile bulwarks to o'erthrow,  
 And burn their fleet.

HEC. Son of the tuneful Muse,  
 And Thracian Strymon's stream, I ever love  
 To speak the truth, for I am not a man  
 Versed in duplicity; long, long ago,  
 Should you have come to succour Troy, nor suffered,  
 Far as on you depended, by our foes  
 This city to be ta'en. You cannot say  
 That uninvited by your friends you came not,  
 Because you marked not our distress. What heralds,  
 What embassies to you did Phrygia send,  
 Beseeching you, the city to protect,  
 What sumptuous presents did she not bestow?  
 But you, our kinsman, who derive your birth  
 From a barbarian stem, to Greece betrayed  
 Us, a barbarian nation, though from ruling  
 Over a petty state, by this right arm  
 I raised you to the wide-extended throne,  
 When round Pangæum and Pæonia's realm  
 Rushing upon the hardiest Thracian troops  
 I broke their ranks of battle, and subdued  
 The people to your empire: but you spurn  
 My benefits, nor come with speed to succour  
 Your friends in their distress. Though they who spring not  
 From the same ancestors, observed our summons;  
 Of whom full many in yon field of death  
 Have tombs heaped o'er them, a most glorious proof  
 Of faith unshaken; others under arms  
 Their chariots mount, and steadfastly endure  
 The wintry blasts, the parching flames of heaven,  
 Nor on a gay convivial couch reclined  
 Like you, O Rhesus, drain the frequent bowl.  
 That you may know I yet can stand alone,

Such conduct I resent ; this to your face  
I speak.

RHE. I also am the same : my language  
Is plain and honest ; I am not a man  
Of mean duplicity. My soul was tortured  
With greater anguish far than thou couldst feel,  
Because I was not present in this land ;  
But Scythia's tribes who near our confines dwell  
Made war against me just as I to Troy  
Was journeying ; I had reached the Euxine shore  
To sail with Thracia's host, the Scythian blood  
There stained our spears, and my brave troops expired  
'Midst intermingled slaughter : this event  
Hindered my reaching Troy, and aiding thee  
In battle. Having conquered them, and taken  
For hostages their children, them I bound  
To pay me annual tribute ; with my fleet  
Then crossed the Hellespont, and marched on foot  
Through various realms, nor, as thou proudly say'st,  
Drained the intoxicating bowl, nor slept  
Beneath a gilded roof, but to such blasts  
As cover with thick ice the Thracian wave,  
Or through Pæonia howl, was I exposed  
Wrapped in this mantle many a sleepless night.  
But I, though late, am in due season come :  
For this is the tenth year since thou hast waged  
An ineffectual war, day after day  
By thee is idly lavished, while the die  
Of battle 'twixt the Argive host and thine  
Spins doubtful ere it fall. But it for me  
Will be sufficient that the sun once mount  
The heavens, while I their bulwarks storm, invade  
Their fleet, and slay the Greeks. To my own home  
I the next day from Ilion will return,  
Thy toils soon ending : let no Trojan bear  
A shield : for with this spear will I subdue  
The boasters, though 'twas late ere I arrived.

CHOR. My soul this language doth approve,  
Such friends as thou art sent by Jove,  
But humbly I that god beseech,  
To pardon thy presumptuous speech.  
The navy launched from Argos' strand,  
Though freighted with a daring band,  
Neither in former times, nor now  
Contained a chief more brave than thou.  
How shall Achilles' self withstand,  
Or Ajax meet, thy vengeful hand ?  
O may the morn with orient ray  
Exhibit that auspicious day,

When thou the victor's prize shalt gain  
And dye with crimson gore the plain.

RHE. Soon with exploits like these will I atone  
For my long absence : but, with due submission  
To Nemesis, I speak ; when from the foe  
We have delivered this beleaguered city  
And seized their spoils for offerings to the gods ;  
With thee to Argos will I go, invade,  
And ravage with victorious arms, all Greece,  
To teach them in their turn what 'tis to suffer.

HEC. Could I escape from the impending stroke,  
And with that safety which we erst enjoyed  
These walls inhabit, I to Heaven should pay  
Full many a grateful vow : but as for Argos,  
As for the Grecian states, to lay them waste  
By arms were far less easy than you speak of.

RHE. Is it not said the bravest chiefs of Greece  
Came hither ?

HEC. Them I hold not in contempt,  
But long have kept at bay.

RHE. When these are slain,  
We therefore each obstruction have removed.

HEC. Forbear to think of distant prospects now,  
While our immediate interests lie neglected.

RHE. Art thou so tame as to endure such wrongs  
Without retorting them ?

HEC. While I maintain  
What I possess, my empire is sufficient.  
But freely take your choice, or in the left  
Or the right wing, or centre of our host  
Display your shield, and range your troops around.

RHE. I singly will encounter all our foes,  
O Hector ; but if thou esteem it base  
Not to assist me when I burn their fleet,  
Because thou hast already toiled so long,  
Oppose me to Achilles in the front  
Of battle.

HEC. We at him no spear must aim.

RHE. Yet was I told he sailed for Troy.

HEC. He sailed,  
And still is here, but angry with the chiefs,  
Refuses to assist them.

RHE. In the camp  
Of Greece, say who is second in renown ?

HEC. Ajax, I deem, and Tydeus' son are equal  
To any ; but most fluent in his speech,  
And with sufficient fortitude inspired,  
Is that Ulysses, from whom Troy hath suffered  
Insults the most atrocious ; for by night,



Entering Minerva's face, he stole her image,  
And bore it to the Grecian fleet: disguised  
In tattered vest, that vile impostor next  
Entered the gates, and cursed the Argive host,  
Sent as a spy to Ilion; having slain  
The sentinels, he through the gates escaped,  
And in some fraudulent scheme is ever found:  
At the Thymbraean temple is he stationed  
Hard by our ramparts, we in him contend  
With a most grievous pest.

RHE. The valiant man  
Is never mean enough to slay his foes  
By stealth, he loves to meet them face to face;  
But, as for him, the recreant chief thou nam'st,  
Who lurking with a thievish purpose frames  
These dark contrivances, as through the gates  
I sally forth to combat, I will seize him:  
Driven through his back, my spear shall leave the miscreant  
Food for the vultures, for the impious robber  
Who spoils the temples of the gods deserves  
No better fate.

HEC. Now choose, for it is night,  
The spot for an encampment: I will show you  
A separate quarter where your troops must sleep.  
But mark me well, Apollo is the watchword;  
In case of an emergency, announce  
This signal to the Thracian host.

[Exit RHESUS.]

Extend  
The watch beyond the lines, and there receive  
Dolon our spy, who sallied forth t' explore  
The navy of our foes; if he be safe  
He, by this time, the trenches must approach.

[Exit HECTOR.]

CHORUS.

I.

Who comes this rampant to defend?  
The times assigned us sentinels is o'er;  
Yon fading constellation shines no more  
Now the seven Pleiades the heaven ascend.  
In ether view the eagle glide.  
Wake! what means this long delay?  
Rise and watch; now dawns the day!  
Saw ye the moon diffuse her radiance wide?  
Aurora is at hand: but at the gate  
(For Dolon sure returns) what faithful guard shall wait?  
SEMICHOR. To whom did the first watch belong?  
SEMICHOR. 'Tis said  
Choræbus, son of Mygdon, is their chief.

SEMICHOR. Who in his room was stationed?

SEMICHOR. The Pæonians

Called from their tent Cilicia's hardy troops.

SEMICHOR. The Mysians summoned us.

SEMICHOR. Haste, let us seek

The fifth division of the watch, and rouse  
Lycia's brave warriors as by lot ordained.

CHORUS.

II.

Hark ! couched on her ill-omened nest,  
Fell murderess of her son, in varied strains  
Near Simois' banks the nightingale complains :  
What sounds melodious heave her throbbing breast !

The flocks on Ida wont to feed  
Still browse o'er that airy height,  
Soothing the cold ear of night,  
Hark to the murmurs of the pastoral reed.  
Sleep on our closing eyelids gently steals ;  
Sweet are its dews when morn her earliest dawn reveals.

SEMICHOR. But wherefore doth not he draw near whom  
Hector  
Sent to explore the fleet ?

SEMICHOR. He hath so long  
Been absent that I tremble.

SEMICHOR. If he fell  
Into some ambush, and is slain, we soon  
Shall have sufficient cause for fear.

SEMICHOR. But haste,  
Rouse Lycia's warriors as by lot ordained. [*Exit* CHORUS.]

ULYSSES, DIOMEDE.

ULY. Heard'st thou, O Diomede, the sound of arms,  
Or in these ears did empty murmurs ring ?

DIO. No ; but the steely trappings which are linked  
To yonder chariots, rattled, and I too  
With vain alarm was seized, till I perceived  
The coursers, who their clanging harness shook.

ULY. Beware, lest in this gloom of night thou stumble  
Upon the sentinels.

DIO. Though in the dark  
We tread, I with such caution will direct  
My steps as not to err.

ULY. But, should'st thou wake them,  
Thou know'st the watchword of their host.

DIO. I know  
It is Apollo ; this I heard from Dolon.

ULY. Ha ! I perceive our foes have left these chambers.

DIO. Here, Dolon told us, is the tent of Hector :  
'Gainst him I wield this javelin.

ULY. What hath happened?  
Is the whole squadron too elsewhere removed?

DIO. Perchance they too 'gainst us may have contrived  
Some stratagem.

ULY. For Hector now is brave  
Since he hath conquered.

DIO. How shall we proceed?  
For in this chamber him we cannot find,  
And all our hopes are vanished.

ULY. To the fleet  
Let us in haste return : for him some god  
Protects, and crowns him with triumphant wreaths :  
We must not strive 'gainst Fortune's dread behests.

DIO. Then to Æneas will we go, or Paris  
That Phrygian most abhorred, and with our swords  
Lop off their heads.

ULY. But how, in darkness wrapt,  
Canst thou direct thy passage through the troops,  
To slay them without danger?

DIO. Yet 'twere base,  
Back to the Grecian fleet should we return,  
No fresh exploit performing 'gainst the foe.

ULY. What means this language? hast thou not performed  
A great exploit? have we not slain the spy  
Who to our navy went, and are not these  
The spoils of Dolon? how canst thou expect  
To spread a general havoc through their troops?  
Comply; let us retire: may Fortune speed  
Our progress homeward.

MINERVA, ULYSSES, DIOMEDE.

MIN. With affliction stung,  
Why from the Trojan camp do ye retire?  
Although the gods forbid you to destroy  
Hector or Paris, heard ye not that Rhesus,  
A mighty chief, with numerous troops is come  
To Troy? If he outlives this night, nor Ajax,  
Nor can Achilles hinder him from wasting  
The camp of Greece, demolishing your walls,  
And forcing a wide passage through your gates  
With his victorious spear: him slay, and all  
Is yours; but go not to the couch of Hector,  
Nor hope to leave that chief a weltering trunk,  
For he must perish by another hand.

ULY. Dread goddess, O Minerva, I distinguished  
Thy well-known voice: for midst unnumbered toils  
Thou ever dost support me: but, oh say,

Where sleeps the mighty warrior thou hast named,  
And in what part of the barbarian host  
Have they assigned his station?

MIN. Near at hand,  
And separate from the Phrygian troops, he lies;  
Hector hath placed him just without the lines  
Till morn arise; conspicuous in the gloom  
Of night, and close beside their sleeping lord,  
Yoked to the car his Thracian coursers stand,  
White as the glossy plumage of the swan:  
Them bear away when ye have slain their lord,  
A glorious prize, for the whole world can boast  
No car beside drawn by such beautiful steeds.

ULY. Either do thou, O Diomed, transpierce  
The Thracian soldiers, or to me consign  
That task; meanwhile seize thou the steeds.

DIO. To slay  
The foe be mine; do you the coursers guide,  
For you are practised in each nicer art,  
And quick of apprehension. To each man  
Should that peculiar station be assigned  
In which he can be useful.

MIN. But to us  
Paris I see is coming, who hath heard  
A doubtful rumour from the watch, that foes  
Enter the trenches.

DIO. Hath he any comrade,  
Or marches he alone?

MIN. Alone he seems  
To go to Hector's chamber, to announce  
That there are foes discovered in the camp.

DIO. Is it not first ordained that he shall die?

MIN. You can no more, the Destinies forbid:

For Hector must not perish by your hand;  
But haste to him on whom ye came to wreak  
Fate's dreadful purposes: myself meanwhile  
Assuming Venus' form, who 'midst the toils  
Of battle by her tutelary care  
Protects him, will with empty words detain  
Paris your foe. Thus much have I declared:  
Yet he, whom you must smite, though near at hand,  
Nor knows, nor hears, the words which I have uttered.

[*Exeunt ULYSSES and DIOMEDE.*]

PARIS, MINERVA.

PAR. General and brother, Hector, thee I call:  
Yet sleep'st thou? doth not this important hour  
Demand thy vigilance? some foes approach,  
Robbers or spies.

MIN. Be of good cheer ; for Venus  
Protects you : I in all your battles feel  
An interest, mindful of the prize I gained  
Favoured by you, and am for ever grateful :  
Now to the host of Ilion I conduct  
Your noble Thracian friend, who from the Muse,  
Harmonious goddess, and from Strymon springs.

PAR. To Troy and me thou ever art a friend.  
In thy behalf when I that judgment gave,  
I boast that for this city I obtained  
The greatest treasure life affords. But hither,  
Hearing an indistinct account, I come ;  
For 'mong the guards there hath prevailed a ramour,  
That Grecian spies have entered Ilion's walls :  
Though the astonished messenger who bore  
These tidings, saw them not himself, nor knows  
Who saw them : I on this account am going  
To Hector's tent.

MIN. Fear nought ; for in the camp  
No new event hath happened. To arrange  
The Thracian troops is Hector gone.

PAR. Thy words  
Are most persuasive, and to them I yield  
Implicit credence. From all fears released,  
I to my former station will return.

MIN. Go and depend upon my guardian care  
To see my faithful votaries ever blest ;  
For you in me shall find a zealous friend. [Exit PARIS.

ULYSSES, DIOMEDE, MINERVA.

MIN. But now to you, my real friends, I speak.  
Son of Laertes, O conceal your sword,  
For we have slain the Thracian chief, and seized  
His coursers, but our foes have ta'en the alarm  
And rush upon you, therefore fly with speed,  
Fly to the naval ramparts. Why delay  
To save your lives when hostile throngs approach?

[Exit MINERVA.

CHORUS, ULYSSES, DIOMEDE.

CHOR. Come on, strike, strike, destroy. Who marches  
yonder?  
Look, look, tis him I mean ! these are the robbers  
Who in the dead of night alarmed our host.  
Hither, my friends, haste hither ; I have seized them.  
What answer mak'st thou ? tell me whence thou cam'st,  
And who thou art.

ULY. No right hast thou to know ;  
Insult me, and this instant thou shalt die.

CHOR. Wilt thou not, ere this lance transpierce thy breast,

Repeat the watchword?

ULY. That thou soon shalt hear;  
Be satisfied.

1st SEMICHOR. Come on, my friends, strike! strike!

2nd SEMICHOR. Hast thou slain Rhesus?

ULY. I have slain the man  
Who would have murdered thee: forbear.

1st SEMICHOR. I will not.

2nd SEMICHOR. Forbear to slay a friend.

1st SEMICHOR. Pronounce the watchword.

ULY. Apollo.

2nd SEMICHOR. Thou art right; let not a spear  
Be lifted up against him.

1st SEMICHOR. Know'st thou whither  
Those men are gone?

2nd SEMICHOR. We saw not.

1st SEMICHOR. Follow close  
Their steps, or we must call aloud for aid.

2nd SEMICHOR. Yet were it most unseemly to disturb  
Our valiant comrades with our nightly fears.

[*Exeunt ULYSSES and DIOMEDE.*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

What chief is he, who moved along;  
What daring plunderer fleet and strong,  
Shall boast he 'scaped my vengeful hand?  
How overtake his rapid flight?

To whom compare him, who by night,  
With dauntless step passed through our armed band  
And slumbering guards? doth he reside

In Thessaly, near ocean's boisterous tide  
In Locris, or those islands scattered o'er  
The waves? whence comes he to this fell debate?

What power supreme doth he adore?

1st SEMICHOR. Was this Ulysses' enterprise, or whose?

2nd SEMICHOR. If we may form our judgment from the past,  
Who but Ulysses—

1st SEMICHOR. Think'st thou that it was?

2nd SEMICHOR. Why not?

1st SEMICHOR. He is an enterprising foe.

2nd SEMICHOR. What bravery? whom do you applaud?

1st SEMICHOR. Ulysses.

2nd SEMICHOR. Praise not the treacherous weapon of a  
robber,

CHORUS.

II.

He entered Ilion once before,  
 With foam his eyes were covered o'er,  
 In tatters hung his squalid vest;  
 He artfully concealed his sword,  
 And sued for fragments from our board;  
 Shorn was his head, and like a beggar dressed;  
 He cursed with simulated hate  
 Th' Atrides, rulers of the Grecian state.  
 May just revenge his forfeit life demand:  
 Would he had perished as his crimes deserve,  
 Before he reached the Phrygian land.

1st SEMICHOR. Whether this deed was by Ulysses wrought  
 It matters not, I shrink with fear, for Hector  
 Will to us guards impute the blame.

2nd SEMICHOR. What charge  
 Can he allege?

1st SEMICHOR. He will suspect.

2nd SEMICHOR. Why shrink  
 With terror?

1st SEMICHOR. 'Twixt our ranks they passed.

2nd SEMICHOR.

Who passed?

1st SEMICHOR. They, who this night have entered Phrygia's  
 camp.

CHARIOTEER OF RHESUS, CHORUS.

CHA. Alas! intolerable stroke of fate!

1st SEMICHOR. Be silent.

2nd SEMICHOR. Rouse! for some one may have fallen  
 Into the snare.

CHA. O dire calamity  
 Of Troy's allies, the Thracians!

1st SEMICHOR. Who is he  
 That groans?

CHA. Ah! wretched me, and O thou king  
 Of Thrace, who in an evil hour beheld'st  
 Accursed Ilion; what an end of life  
 Was thine!

CHOR. But which of our allies art thou?  
 For o'er these eyes the gloom of night is spread,  
 And I discern thee not.

CHA. Where shall I find  
 Some of the Trojan chiefs? beneath his shield  
 O where doth Hector taste the charms of sleep?  
 To which of Ilion's leaders shall I tell  
 All we have suffered? and what wounds unseen

Some stranger hath on us with ruthless hand  
 Inflicted? but he vanished and hath heaped  
 Conspicuous sorrows on the Thracian realm.

CHOR. Some terrible disaster to the troops  
 Of Thrace it seems hath happened, if aright  
 I comprehend what I from him have heard.

CHA. Our host is utterly destroyed, our king  
 Hath been despatched by some foul secret stroke.  
 How am I tortured by a deadly wound,  
 Yet know not to what cause I must impute  
 My perishing! 'Twas by the Fates ordained,  
 That I, and Rhesus, who to Ilion led  
 Auxiliar troops, ingloriously should bleed.

CHOR. He in no riddle hath expressed the tale  
 Of our misfortunes; he asserts too clearly  
 That our allies are slain.

CHA. We are most wretched,  
 And to our wretchedness have joined disgrace,  
 A twofold evil. For, to die with glory,  
 If glory must be purchased at the expense  
 Of life, is very bitterness I deem  
 To him who bleeds (for what can make amends  
 For such a loss as life); but to the living  
 Is he the source of pride, from him his house  
 Derives renown. But we, alas! like fools,  
 Ignobly perish. Hector in the camp  
 No sooner fixed our station, and pronounced  
 The watchword, than we slept upon the plain,  
 O'ercome with toil; no sentinels were stationed  
 To watch our troops by night, nor were our arms  
 Duly arranged, and to the harnessed steeds  
 Hung no alarm bell; for our monarch heard  
 That ye had proved victorious, and with ruin  
 Threatened the Grecian fleet. Immersed we lay  
 In luckless slumber; till disturbed in mind  
 I started up, and with a liberal hand  
 Measured the coursers' food, resolved betimes  
 To yoke them for the battle. I beheld  
 Two men, who, in the midnight darkness, walked  
 Around our camp; but when I moved, they fled,  
 And disappeared immediately; with threats  
 I bade them keep aloof: 'twas my conjecture  
 That robbers, some of our own countrymen,  
 Approached: they answered not, nor know I more.  
 Returning to my tent, again I slept,  
 And forms tremendous hovered in my dream.  
 For near my royal master, as I stood,  
 I saw two visionary wolves ascend  
 'Those coursers' backs which I was wont to guide,



Of lashing with their tails they forced them on,  
Indignant breathing as they champed the bit,  
And struggling with dismay ; but in attempting  
To drive away these ravenous beasts, I woke,  
Roused by the terrors of the night, and heard,  
Soon as I raised my head, expiring groans ;  
The tepid current of my master's blood,  
Yet gasping in the agonies of death,  
Besprinkled me. As from the couch I leaped  
Unarmed, and sought for weapons, some strong warrior  
Smote with his sword my ribs ; the ghastly wound  
Displayed his might : prostrate I sunk to earth.  
Bearing the steeds away, and glittering car,  
They by the swiftness of their feet escaped,  
Tortured with pain, too faint to stand, I know  
Too well the dire calamity these eyes  
Beheld ; but cannot say, or through what means,  
Or by the hand of whom, my lord was slain :  
Yet can I guess that by our friends we suffer.

CHOR. O charioteer of Thracia's wretched king,  
Be well assured this deed was by our foes  
Committed. For lo ! Hector's self, apprized  
Of this calamity, draws near ; he feels  
Such anguish as he ought for thy disasters.

HECTOR, CHARIOTEER OF RHESUS, CHORUS.

HEC. O ye accursed authors of this mischief,  
How did those spies, who by the foe were sent  
Thus, to your infamy, escape, and spread  
Dire havoc through the host ; both as they entered  
And as they left the camp ? Yet, unmolested,  
Ye suffered them to pass. Who should be punished  
But you ? for you, I say, were stationed here  
To watch the camp ; but they without a wound  
Are vanished, laughing at the Phrygian troops  
For their unmanly cowardice, and me  
Their leader. Be assured, by Jove I swear,  
All-gracious father, or the scourge or death  
Shall wait you for such guilt, else deem that Hector  
Is but a thing of nought, a very coward.

CHOR. Great is, alas ! my danger, mighty prince,  
The foe stole in while I to you conveyed  
Those tidings, that the Greeks around their ships  
Had kindled fires : through all the live-long night  
These watchful eyes have ne'er been sealed by sleep.  
By Simois' holy fountain I conjure you,  
My royal lord, impute no blame to me,  
For I am wholly guiltless. If you learn  
That in my deeds or words I have offended,

Plunge me alive beneath earth's deepest vault ;  
I ask no mercy.

CHA. Why dost thou upbraid  
These for the guilt ? by plausible harangues  
Wouldst thou impose on thy barbarian friends ;  
O thou barbarian, thou the bloody deed  
Didst perpetrate ; nor can our slaughtered comrades,  
Nor we who linger pierced with ghastly wounds,  
Admit that 'twas another. There requires  
A long and subtle speech to make me think  
Thou didst not basely murder thy allies,  
Because the beauty of our steeds attracted  
Thy admiration, and on their account  
Hast thou slain those who at thy earnest prayer  
Landed on Ilion's shore ; they came, they died.  
With greater decency than thou observ'st,  
Who dost assassinate thy friends, did Paris  
The rites of hospitality infringe.  
Pretend not that some Grecian came unseen  
And smote us. Who subdued the Phrygian host,  
Who reached our quarters unobserved by Hector ?  
Thou with the Trojan army wert before us ;  
But who was wounded, who among thy troops  
Expired, when through their ranks as thou pretend'st  
The foe to us advanced ? But I was wounded,  
And they, whom a more grievous ill o'ertook,  
No more behold the sun. To be explicit,  
I charge no Greek : what foe could come by night  
And find out Rhesus' tent, unless some god  
Had told the murderers, for they sure knew nought  
Of his arrival ? therefore all this mischief  
Must be thy sole contrivance.

HEC. Our allies  
Have long assisted us since first the Greeks  
This realm invaded ; and I never heard  
They to my charge imputed any crime.  
Could I begin with thee ? by such desire  
For beauteous steeds may I be never seized,  
As to induce me to destroy my friends.  
Ulysses was the author of this deed.  
What Greek could have accomplished or contrived  
Such an exploit, but he ? Him much I fear :  
My soul is also troubled lest he light  
On Dolon too, and slay him, for 'tis long  
Since he went forth, nor doth he yet return.

CHA. I know not that Ulysses whom thou nam'st,  
Nor did a foe inflict this ghastly wound.

HEC. Therefore retain, since thus to thee it seems,  
Thy own opinion.

CHA. O my native land,  
Might I but die in thee!

HEC. Thou shalt not die :  
For of the dead the number is sufficient.

CHA. Rest of my lord, but whither shall I turn ?

HEC. Thou in my house shalt careful treatment find,  
And healing balsams.

CHA. Shall the ruthless hands  
Of murderers dress my wounds ?

HEC. He will not cease  
Alleging the same charge.

CHA. Perdition seize  
The author of this bloody deed ! my tongue  
Has fixed no charge, as thou pretend'st, on thee ;  
But Justice knows.

HEC. Conduct him to my palace  
With speed, that we may 'scape his clamorous plaints.  
But you must go, and to the citizens  
Proclaim, acquainting Priam, and the elders  
Who sit in council, first, that I direct  
The bodies of the slain shall be interred  
With due respect beside the public road.

[Exit CHARIOTEER, supported by one of  
HECTOR'S Attendants.

CHOR. Why from the summit of exalted bliss  
Into fresh woes hath some malignant god  
Plunged Troy, why caused this sad reverse of fortune ?

*The MUSE appears in the air,* HECTOR, CHORUS.

CHOR. High o'er our heads what deity, O king,  
Is hovering ? in her hands a recent corse  
She bears : I shudder at the dreadful sight.

MUSE. Ye Trojans, mark me well : for I a Muse  
Who by the wise am worshipped, hither come,  
One of the nine famed sisters, having seen  
The wretched fate of this my dearest son,  
Who by the foe was slain : but he who smote  
The generous youth, Ulysses, that dissembler,  
At length shall suffer as his crimes deserve.

ODE.

I.

Parental anguish rends my breast,  
For thee my son, my son, I grieve,  
Thy mother sinks with woes oppressed.  
Why didst thou take this road, why leave  
Thy home, and march to Ilion's gate,  
Where death did thy arrival wait ?

Oft with maternal zeal I strove  
 Thy luckless courage to restrain,  
 And oft thy sire opposed in vain.  
 But now with ineffectual love,  
 My dearest son, thee now no more,  
 Thee, O my son, must I deplore.

CHOR. As far as bosoms, by no kindred ties  
 United, can partake a mother's grief,  
 Do I bewail thy son's untimely fate.

MUSE.

II.

On him your tenfold vengeance shed  
 From Oeneus who derives his birth,  
 Smite base Ulysses' perjured head,  
 Ye fiends who desolate the earth ;  
 Through them with agonizing pain  
 I mourn my valiant offspring slain ;  
 May Helen too partake their doom,  
 Who from her bridal mansions fled,  
 And sought th' adulterer's Phrygian bed ;  
 For thou in Troy art to the tomb  
 By her consigned ; and many a state  
 Bewails its bravest warriors' fate.

Much while on earth, and since thy murmuring ghost  
 Was plunged in Orcus' dreary mansions more,  
 O offspring of Philammon, didst thou wound  
 My soul : that arrogance which caused thy ruin,  
 That contest with Pieria's choir, gave birth  
 To this unhappy youth : for having passed  
 The rapid current, with incautious step  
 Approaching Strymon's genial bed, we mounted  
 Pangæum's summit, for its golden mines  
 Distinguished ; each melodious instrument  
 Around us in full concert breathed ; our strife  
 Was there decided with the Thracian minstrel ;  
 That Thamyris who dared blaspheme our art,  
 We of his eyes deprived. But since I bore  
 Thee, O my son, through deference for my sisters,  
 And for my own reputed chastity,  
 Thee to the watery mansions of thy sire  
 I sent ; and Strymon, to no human care,  
 But to the nymphs who haunt his limpid founts,  
 For nurture did consign thee ; from those virgins  
 When, O my dearest son, thou hadst received  
 The best of educations, thou becam'st  
 Monarch of Thrace, the first of men. I felt

No boding apprehensions of thy death ;  
 By thee, while marshalled on thy native ground,  
 A-hirst for blood the dauntless squadrons moved.  
 But thee I cautioned, for I knew thy fate,  
 That thou to Troy shouldst never go ; but thee  
 Th' ambassadors of Hector and the Senate,  
 By oft repeated messages, persuaded  
 To come to the assistance of thy friends.  
 Yet think not, O Minerva, thou sole cause  
 Of my son's fate, that thou these watchful eyes  
 Hast 'scaped ; Ulysses and the son of Tydeus  
 Were not the authors of this bloody deed,  
 Although they gave the wound. We sister Muses  
 Honour thy city, in thy land we dwell.  
 Orpheus, the kinsman of this hapless youth  
 Whom thou hast slain, dark mysteries did unfold ;  
 And by Apollo, and our sister choir,  
 Thy venerable citizen Musæus  
 Was taught to soar beyond each warbled strain  
 Of pristine melody : but in return  
 For all these favours, bearing in my arms  
 My son, I utter this funereal dirge ;  
 But I no other minstrel will employ.

CHOR. Falsely the wounded Thracian charioteer  
 Charged us with a conspiracy to slay him.

HEC. Full well I knew, there needed not a secret  
 To inform me, that he perished by the arts  
 Of Ithacus. But was it not my duty

When I my country saw by Grecian troops  
 Besieged, to send forth heralds to my friends,  
 Requesting them to aid us ? I did send,  
 And Rhesus came, by gratitude constrained,  
 Illustrious partner of my toils. His death  
 Lamenting, will I raise a tomb to grace  
 The corse of my ally, and o'er the flame

Strew tissue'd vests : for with confederate arms  
 Dauntless he came, though piteous was his death.

MUSE. They shall not plunge him in the yawning grave,  
 Such vows will I address to Pluto's bride.

Daughter of fruitful Ceres, to release  
 His ghost from the drear shades beneath : she owes  
 To Orpheus' friends such honours. But henceforth,  
 Dead as it were to me, will he no more  
 Behold the sun, we ne'er must meet again,  
 Nor shall he see his mother, but shall lie  
 Concealed beneath the caverns of that land  
 With silver mines abounding, from a man  
 Exalted to a god, restored to life,  
 The priest of Bacchus, and of him who dwells

Beneath Pangeum's rock, a god adored  
 By those who haunt his orgies. But ere long  
 To yonder goddess of the briny waves  
 Shall I bear doleful tidings : for by fate  
 It is decreed, her offspring too shall die ;  
 But first our sisterhood, in choral plaints,  
 Will sing of thee, O Rhesus, and hereafter  
 Achilles, son of Thetis, shall demand  
 Our elegiac strains, not she who slew  
 Thee, hapless youth, Minerva, can redeem him ;  
 Such an inevitable shaft is stored  
 In Phœbus' quiver. O ye pangs that rend  
 A mother's breast, ye toils the lot of man ;  
 They who behold you in your real light  
 Will live without a progeny, nor mourn  
 With hopeless anguish o'er their children's tomb.

[Exit the MUSE.]

CHOR. To bury the deceased with honours due,  
 Will be his mother's care : but if, O Hector,  
 Thou mean'st to execute some great emprise,  
 'Tis now the time : for morn already dawns.

HEC. Go, and this instant bid our comrades arm,  
 Harness the steeds : but while ye in these toils  
 Are busied, ye the signal must await,  
 Th' Etrurian trumpet's clangour ; for I trust  
 I first shall o'er the Grecian host prevail,  
 Shall storm their ramparts, and then burn their fleet,  
 And that Hyperion's orient beams will bring  
 A day of freedom to Troy's valiant race.

CHOR. Obey the monarch : clad in glittering mail  
 Let us go forth, and his behests proclaim  
 To our associates ; for that god who fights  
 Our battles, haply will bestow success.

# THE TROJAN CAPTIVES.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

NEPTUNE.  
MINERVA.  
HECUBA.  
CHORUS OF CAPTIVE  
TROJAN DAMES.

TALTHYBIUS.  
CASSANDRA.  
ANDROMACHE.  
MENELAUS.  
HELEN.

SCENE.—BEFORE THE ENTRANCE OF AGAMEMNON'S TENT  
IN THE GRECIAN CAMP NEAR TROY.

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### NEPTUNE.

FROM the *Ægean* deep, in mazy dance  
Where *Nereus'* daughters glide with agile feet,  
I Neptune hither come. For round the fields  
Of *Ilion*, since *Apollo* and myself  
With symmetry exact reared many a tower  
Hewn from the solid rock; the love I bore  
The city where my *Phrygian* votaries dwelt,  
Laid waste by *Greece*, where smoke e'en now ascends  
The heavens, hath ne'er been rooted from this breast,  
For on *Parnassus* bred, the *Phocian* chief  
*Epeus*, by *Minerva's* arts inspired,  
Framed with a skilful hand, and through the gates  
Sent that accursed machine, the horse which teemed  
With ambushed javelins. Through forsaken groves,  
Through the polluted temples of the gods,  
Flow tides of crimson slaughter; at the base  
Of altars sacred to *Hercæan Jove*,  
Fell hoary *Priam*. But huge heaps of gold  
And *Phrygian* plunder, to the fleet of *Greece*  
Are sent: the leaders of the host that sacked  
This city, wait but for a prosperous breeze,  
That after ten years absence they their wives  
And children may with joy behold. Subdued  
By *Juno*, *Argive* goddess, and *Minerva*,  
Who leagued in *Phrygia's* overthrow, I leave

Troy the renowned, and my demolished shrines.  
 For when pernicious solitude extends  
 O'er cities her inexorable sway,  
 Abandoned are the temples of the gods,  
 None comes to worship there. Scamander's banks  
 Re-echo many a shriek of captive dames  
 Distributed by lot; th' Arcadians, some,  
 Some the Thessalians gain, and some the sons  
 Of Theseus leaders of th' Athenian troops :  
 But they whom chance distributes not, remain  
 Beneath yon roof selected by the chiefs  
 Of the confederate army. Justly deemed  
 A captive, among them is Spartan Helen :  
 And if the stranger wishes to behold  
 That wretched woman, Hecuba lies stretched  
 Before the gate, full many are her tears,  
 And her afflictions many : at the tomb  
 Of stern Achilles her unhappy daughter  
 Polyxena died wretchedly, her lord  
 The royal Priam, and her sons are slain,  
 That spotless virgin too whom from his shrine  
 Apollo with prophetic gifts inspired,  
 Cassandra, spurning every sacred rite,  
 Did Agamemnon violently drag  
 To his adulterous bed. But, O farewell,  
 Thou city prosperous once ; ye splendid towers,  
 Had not Minerva's self ordained your fall,  
 Ye still on your firm basis might remain.

## MINERVA, NEPTUNE.

MIN. May I accost the god who to my sire  
 In blood is nearest, mighty, through high Heaven  
 Revered, and lay aside our ancient hate?

NEP. 'Tis well, thou royal maid : an interview  
 'Twixt those of the same house, is to the soul  
 An efficacious philtre.

MIN. I applaud  
 Those who are temperate in their wrath, and bring  
 Such arguments, O monarch, as affect  
 Both you and me.

NEP. From all th' assembled gods  
 Some new commission bear'st thou, or from Jove,  
 Or what celestial power?

MIN. From none of these.  
 But in the cause of Troy, whose fields we tread,  
 I to your aid betake me, and would join  
 Our common strength.

NEP. Hast thou then laid aside



Thy former hate, to pity Troy, consumed  
By the relentless flames?

MIN. First, thither turn  
Your views : to me will you unfold your counsels,  
And aid the schemes I would effect?

NEP. With joy :  
But I meanwhile would thy designs explore,  
Whether thou com'st on the behalf of Greece,  
Or Troy.

MIN. The Trojans, erst my foes, I wish  
To cheer, and to embitter the return  
Of the victorious Grecian host.

NEP. What means  
This change of temper? to excess thou hat'st  
And lov'st at random.

MIN. Know you not the insult  
Which hath been shown to me, and to my temple?

NEP. I know that Ajax violently tore  
Cassandra thence.

MIN. Yet by the Greeks unpunished  
He 'scaped, and e'en uncensured.

NEP. Though the Greeks  
O'erthrew Troy's walls through thy auxiliar might—

MIN. And for this very cause will I conspire  
With you to punish them.

NEP. I am prepared  
For any enterprise thou wilt. What mean'st thou?

MIN. Their journey home I am resolved to make  
Most inauspicious.

NEP. While they yet remain  
Upon the shore, or 'midst the briny waves?

MIN. As to their homes from Ilion's coast they sail.  
For Jove will send down rain, immoderate hail,  
And pitchy blasts of air : he promises  
To give me too his thunderbolts to smite  
The Greeks and fire their ships ; but join your aid,  
Cause the Ægean deep with threefold waves,  
And ocean's whirlpools horribly to rage,  
Fill with their courses the unfathomed caves  
Beneath Eubœa's rocks, that Greece may learn  
My shrines to reverence, nor provoke the gods.

NEP. It shall be done : there need not many words  
To recommend thy suit. My storms shall rouse  
Th' Ægean deep ; the shores of Myconè,  
Scyros with Lemnos, all the Delian rocks,  
And steep Caphareus with full many a corse  
Will I o'erspread. But mount Olympus' height,  
And from the Thunderer's hand his flaming shafts  
Receiving, mark when the devoted host

Of Greece weigh anchor. Frantic is the man  
 Who dares to lay the peopled city waste,  
 Temples with tombs profaning, and bereaves  
 Of their inhabitants those sacred vaults  
 Where sleep the dead ; at length shall vengeance smite  
 That hardened miscreant in his bold career. [*Exeunt.*]

*The Scene opens, and discovers HECUBA on a couch.*

HEC. Arise, thou wretch, and from the dust uplift  
 Thy drooping head ; though Ilion be no more,  
 And thou a queen no longer, yet endure  
 With patience Fortune's change, and as the tide  
 Or as capricious Fortune wills, direct  
 Thy sails, nor turn against the dashing wave  
 Life's stubborn prow, for chance must guide thy voyage.  
 Alas ! for what but groans belongs to me  
 Whose country, children, husband, are no more ?  
 Oh, mighty splendour of my sires, now pent  
 In a small tomb, how art thou found a thing  
 Of no account ! What portion of my woes  
 Shall I suppress, or what describe, how frame  
 A plaintive strain ? Now fixed on this hard couch,  
 Wretch that I am, are my unwieldy limbs.  
 Ah me ! my head, my temples, ah, my side !  
 Oh, how I wish to turn, and to stretch forth  
 These joints ! My tears shall never cease to flow,  
 For like the Muse's lyre, th' affecting tale  
 Of their calamities consoles the wretched.  
 Ye prows of those swift barks which to the coast  
 Of fated Ilion, from the Grecian ports  
 Adventurous launched amid the purple wave,  
 Accompanied by inauspicious pæans  
 From pipes, and the shrill flute's enlivening voice,  
 While from the mast devolved the twisted cordage  
 By Egypt first devised, ye to the bay  
 Of Troy did follow Menelaus' wife,  
 Helen, abhorred adult'ress, who disgraced  
 Castor her brother, and Eurotas' stream :  
 She murdered Priam, sire of fifty sons,  
 And me the wretched Hecuba hath plunged  
 Into this misery. Here, alas ! I sit  
 In my loathed prison, Agamemnon's tent ;  
 From princely mansions dragged, an aged slave,  
 My hoary tresses shorn, this head deformed  
 With baldness. But, alas ! ye hapless wives  
 Of Ilion's dauntless warriors, blooming maids,  
 And brides affianced in an evil hour,  
 Together let us weep, for Ilion's smoke  
 Ascends the skies. Like the maternal bird,

Who wails her callow brood, I now commence  
A strain far different from what erst was heard  
When I on mighty Priam's sceptred state  
Proudly relving, led the Phrygian dance  
Before the hallowed temples of the gods.

*[She rises, and comes forth from the tent.]*

SEMICHORUS, HECUBA.

SEMICHOR. O Hecuba, what mean these clamorous notes,  
These shrieks of woe? for from the vaulted roof  
Thy plaints re-echoing smite my distant ear,  
And fresh alarms seize every Phrygian dame  
Who in these tents enslaved deplores her fate.

HEC. E'en now, my daughter, at the Grecian fleet  
Th' exulting sailors ply their oars.

SEMICHOR. Ah me!  
What mean they? will they instantly convey me  
Far from my ruined country?

HEC. By conjecture  
Alone am I acquainted with our doom.

SEMICHOR. Soon shall we hear this sentence: "From  
these doors  
Come forth ye Trojan captives, for the Greeks  
Are now preparing to return."

HEC. O cease,  
My friends, nor from her chambers hither bring  
Cassandra, frantic prophetess, defiled  
By Argive ruffians, for the sight of her  
Would but increase my griefs.

SEMICHOR. Troy, wretched Troy,  
Thou art no more, they to whom fate ordains  
No longer on thy fostering soil to dwell  
Are wretched, both the living and the slain.

CHORUS, HECUBA.

CHOR. Trembling I come from Agamemnon's tent,  
Of thee my royal mistress to inquire  
Whether the Greeks have doomed me to be slain,  
And whether yet along the poop arranged  
The mariners prepare to ply their oars.

HEC. Deprived of sleep through horror, O my daughter,  
I hither came: but on the road I see  
A Grecian herald.

CHOR. Tell me to what lord  
Am wretched I consigned.

HEC. E'en now the lot  
Is casting to decide your fate.

CHOR. What chief  
To Argos, or to Phthia, me shall bear,  
Or to some island, sorrowing, far from Troy?

HEC. To whom shall wretched I, and in what land  
 Become a slave, decrepit like the drone  
 Through age, mere semblance of a pallid corse,  
 Or flitting spectre from the realms beneath?  
 Shall I be stationed or to watch the door,  
 Or tend the children of a haughty lord,  
 Erst placed at Troy in rank supreme?

CHOR.

Alas !

HEC. With what loud complaints dost thou revive thy woes !

CHOR. I never more through Ida's loom shall dart  
 The shuttle, nor behold a blooming race  
 Of children, in those lighter tasks employed  
 Which suit the young and beauteous, to the couch  
 Of some illustrious Greek conveyed, the joys  
 Which night and fortune yields are lost to me ;  
 Or filled with water, from Pirene's spring  
 Shall I be doomed to bear the ponderous urn.

HEC. O could we reach the famed and happy realm  
 Of Theseus, distant from Eurotas' tide,  
 And curst Therapne's gates, where I should meet  
 Perfidious Helen, and remain a slave  
 To Menelaus, who demolished Troy.

CHOR. By fame's loud voice I am informed, the vale  
 Of Peneus, at Olympus base, abounds  
 With wealth and plenteous fruitage.

HEC.

This I make

My second option, next the blest domain  
 Of Theseus.

CHOR. I am told that Vulcan's realm  
 Of Ætna, opposite Phœnicia's coast  
 The mother of Sicilian hills, is famed  
 For palms obtained by valour. Through the realm  
 Adjacent, bordering on th' Ionian deep,  
 Crathis the bright, for auburn hair renowned,  
 The tribute of its holy current pours,  
 And scatters blessings o'er a martial land.  
 But lo, with hasty step a herald comes  
 Bearing some message from the Grecian host !  
 What is his errand ? for we now are slaves  
 To yon proud rulers of the Doric realm.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. O Hecuba, full oft, you know, to Troy  
 I, as their herald, by the Grecian host  
 Have been despatched ; you cannot be a stranger  
 To me, Talthybius, who to you, and all,  
 One message bring.

HEC.

This, this, my dearest friends,  
 Is what I long have feared.

TAL.                                The lots are cast  
Already, if your terrors thence arose.

HEC. Alas, to what Thessalian city saidst thou,  
Or to the Phthian, or the Theban realm  
Shall we be carried?

TAL. To a separate lord  
Hath each of you distinctly been assigned.

HEC. To whom, alas, to whom am I allotted?  
What Phrygian dames do happier fortunes wait?

TAL. I know; but be distinct in your inquiries,  
Nor ask at once a multitude of questions.

HEC. Say who by lot hath gained my wretched daughter  
Cassandra?

TAL. Her the royal Agamemnon  
His chosen prize hath taken.

HEC. As a slave  
To tend his Spartan wife? ah, me!

TAL. No slave,  
But concubine.

HEC. What, Phœbus' votive maid,  
To whom the god with golden tresses gave  
This privilege, that she should pass her life  
In celibacy?

TAL. With the shafts of love  
Hath the prophetic nymph transpierced his breast.

HEC. My daughter, cast the sacred keys away,  
And rend the garlands thou with pride didst wear.

TAL. Is it not great for captives to ascend  
The regal couch?

HEC. But where is she whom late  
Ye took away, and whither have ye borne  
That daughter?

TAL. Speak you of Polyxena,  
Or for whom else would you inquire?

HEC. On whom  
Hath chance bestowed her?

TAL. At Achilles' tomb  
It is decreed that she shall minister.

HEC. Wretch that I am! for his sepulchral rites  
Have I then borne a priestess? but what law  
Is this, what Grecian usage, O my friend?

TAL. Esteem your daughter happy; for with her  
All now is well.

HEC. What saidst thou? doth she live?

TAL. 'Tis her peculiar fate to be released  
From all affliction.

HEC. But, alas! what fortune  
Attends the warlike Hector's captive wife,  
How fares it with the lost Andromache?

TAL. Her to Achilles' son hath from the band  
Of captives chosen.

HEC. As to me who need  
For a third foot, the staff which in these hands  
I hold, whose head is whitened o'er with age,  
To whom am I a slave?

TAL. By lot the king  
Of Ithaca Ulysses hath obtained you.

HEC. Alas! alas! let your shorn temples feel  
The frequent blow; rend your discoloured cheeks.  
Ah me! I am allotted for a slave  
To a detestable and treacherous man,  
Sworn foe of justice, to that lawless viper,  
With double tongue confounding all, 'twixt friends  
Exciting bitter hate. Ye Trojan dames,  
O shed the sympathizing tear: I sink  
Beneath the pressure of relentless fate.

CHOR. Thy doom, O queen, thou know'st: but to what chief,  
Hellenian or Achaian, I belong  
Inform me.

TAL. Peace! Conduct Cassandra hither  
With speed, ye guards, into our general's hands  
When I his captive have delivered up,  
That we the rest may portion out. Why gleams  
That blazing torch within? would Ilion's dames  
Their chambers fire? what mean they? doomed to leave  
This land, and to be borne to Argive shores,  
Are they resolved to perish in the flames?  
The soul, inspired with an unbounded love  
Of freedom, ill sustains such woes. Burst open  
The doors, lest, to their honour and the shame  
Of Greece, on me the censure fall.

HEC. They kindle  
No conflagration, but, with frantic step,  
My daughter, lo! Cassandra rushes hither.

CASSANDRA, TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

CAS. Avaunt! the sacred flame I bring  
With reverential awe profound,  
And wave the kindled torch around,  
O Hymen, thou benignant king.  
The bridegroom comes with jocund pride,  
I too am styled a happy bride,  
My name through Argos' streets shall ring,  
O Hymen, thou benignant king!  
While thou attend'st my father's bier,  
O Hecuba, with many a tear,  
While Ilion's ramparts overthrown  
From thee demand th' incessant groan,

Ere the bright sun withhold his ray,  
 E'en in the glaring front of day,  
 I bid the nuptial incense blaze  
 To thee, O Hymen, thee whose power  
 Invoking at her bridal hour  
 The bashful virgin comes. Yon' maze  
 Encircling, 'mid the choral dance,  
 As ancient usage bids, advance,  
 And in thy hand a flaming pine,  
 O mother, brandish. God of wine,  
 Thy shouting votaries hither bring,  
 As if in Ilion thou hadst found  
 Old Priam still a happy king.  
 Range that holy group around,  
 O Phœbus, in thy laureate mead,  
 Thy temple, shall the victim bleed.  
 Let Hymen, Hymen, Hymen, sound.  
 My mother, for the dance prepare,  
 Vault nimbly, and our revels share.  
 At Hymen's shrine, my friends, prolong  
 Your vows, awake th' ecstatic song ;  
 In honour of my bridal day,  
 Chant, Phrygian nymphs, the choral lay,  
 And celebrate the chief whom fate  
 Ordains to be Cassandra's mate.

CHOR. Wilt thou not stop the princess, lest she rush  
 With frantic step amid the Grecian host ?

HÆC. O Vulcan, wont to light the bridal torch,  
 Now dost thou brandish an accursed flame ;  
 My soul foresaw not this. Alas ! my daughter,  
 I little thought, that 'midst the din of arms,  
 Or while we crouch beneath the Argive spear,  
 Thou couldst have celebrated such espousals.  
 Give me the torch, for while with frantic speed  
 Thou rushest on, it trembles in thy hand.  
 Nor yet have thy afflictions, O my daughter,  
 Brought back thy wandering reason, thou remain'st  
 Disordered as before. Ye Trojan dames,  
 Remove yon blazing pines, and in the stead  
 Of these her bridal songs let tears express  
 The anguish of your souls.

CAS. O mother, place  
 A laureate wreath on my victorious brow,  
 Exulting lead me to the monarch's bed.  
 And if for thee too slowly I advance,  
 Drag me along by force ; for I am now  
 No more the spouse of Phœbus ; but that king  
 Of Greece, famed Agamemnon, shall in me  
 Take to his arms a bride more inauspicious



Than even Helen's self: him will I smite,  
And lay his palace waste, in great revenge  
For my slain sire and brothers. But I cease  
These menaces, and speak not of the axe  
Which shall smite me and others, or the conflict  
My wedlock shall produce, whence by the hands  
Of her own son a mother shall be slain,  
And th' overthrow of Atreus' guilty house.  
This city will I prove to have been happier  
Than the victorious Greeks (for though the gods  
Inspire, I curb the transports of my soul),  
Who for one single woman, to regain  
The beauteous Helen only, wasted lives  
Unnumbered. Their wise leader, in the cause  
Of those he hated, slew whom most he loved;  
He to his brother yielded up his daughter,  
Joy of his house, for that vile woman's sake,  
Who with her own consent, and not by force,  
Was borne away. But at Scamander's banks  
When they arrived, they died, though not by exile  
Torn from their country, or their native towers:  
But them who in embattled fields were slain  
Their children saw not, nor in decent shroud  
Were they enwrapped by their loved consorts' hands,  
But lie deserted on a foreign coast:  
Their sorrows also who remained at home  
Are similar; in widowhood forlorn  
Some die; and others, of their own brave sons  
Deprived, breed up the children of a stranger;  
Nor at their slighted tombs is blood poured forth  
To drench the thirsty ground. Their host deserves  
Praises like these. 'Tis better not to speak  
Of what is infamous, nor shall my Muse  
Record the shameful tale. But, first and greatest  
Of glories, in their country's cause expired  
The Trojans; the remains of those who fell  
In battle, by their friends borne home, obtained  
Sepulchral honours in their native soil,  
That duteous office kindred hands performed:  
While every Phrygian who escaped the sword  
Still with his wife and children did reside,  
Joy to the Greeks unknown. Now hear the fate  
Of Hector, him whom thou bewail'st, esteemed  
The bravest of our heroes, by the Greeks  
Landing on Ilion's coast the warrior fell;  
In their own country had the foe remained,  
His valour ne'er had been displayed: but Paris  
Wedded the daughter of imperial Jove,  
In her possessing an illustrious bride.



It is the wise man's duty to avoid  
 Perilous war. After the die is cast,  
 He who undaunted meets the fatal stroke,  
 Adds to his native city fair renown ;  
 But the last moments of a coward shame  
 The land which gave him birth. Forbear to weep,  
 My mother, for thy ruined country's fate ;  
 Weep not because thou seest thy daughter borne  
 To Agamemnon's bed, for by these spousals  
 Our most inveterate foes shall I destroy.

CHOR. How sweetly 'midst the sorrows of thy house  
 Thou smil'st ! ere long perchance wilt thou afford  
 A melancholy instance that thy strains  
 Are void of truth.

TAL. Had not Apollo fired  
 E'en to distraction thy perverted soul,  
 Thou on my honoured leader, ere he quit  
 The shores of Ilion, shouldst not unavenged  
 Pour forth these omens. But, alas ! the great,  
 And they who in th' opinion of mankind  
 Are wise, in no respect excel the vulgar.  
 For the dread chieftain of the Grecian host,  
 The son of Atreus, loves with boundless passion  
 This damsel frantic as the Mænades.  
 Myself am poor, yet would not I accept  
 A wife like her. Since thou hast lost thy reason,  
 I to the winds consign thy bitter taunts  
 'Gainst Argos, with the praises thou bestow'st  
 On Troy. Thou bride of Agamemnon, come,  
 Follow me to the fleet. But when Ulysses  
 Would bear you hence, O Hecuba, obey  
 The summons, you are destined to attend  
 A queen called virtuous by all those who come  
 To Ilion.

CAS. Arrogant, detested slave !  
 All heralds are like thee, the public scorn,  
 Crouching with abject deference to some king  
 Or city. Say'st thou, "To Ulysses' house  
 My mother shall be borne ?" Of what account  
 Were then the oracles Apollo gave  
 Uttered by me his priestess, which declare,  
 "She here shall die ?" I spare the shameful tale.  
 He knows not, the unhappy Ithacus,  
 What evils yet await him, in the tears  
 Of me and every captive Phrygian maid,  
 While he exults, and deems our misery gain.  
 Ten more long years elapsed beyond the term  
 Spent in besieging Ilion, he alone  
 Shall reach his country ; witness thou who dwell'st

'Midst ocean's straits tempestuous, dire Charybdis,  
 Ye mountains where on human victims feast  
 The Cyclops, with Ligurian Circe's isle,  
 Whose wand transforms to swine, the billowy deep,  
 Covered with shipwrecks, the bewitching Lotus,  
 The sacred Oxen of the Sun, whose flesh  
 Destined to utter a tremendous voice  
 The banquet shall embitter : he at length,  
 In a few words his history to comprise,  
 Alive must travel to the shades beneath,  
 And hardly 'scaping from a watery grave  
 In his own house find evils numberless.  
 But why do I recount Ulysses' toils?  
 Lead on, that I the sooner in the realms  
 Of Pluto, with that bridegroom may consummate  
 My nuptials. Ruthless miscreant as thou art,  
 Thou in the tomb ignobly shalt be plunged  
 At midnight ; nor shall the auspicious beams  
 Of day illumine thy funereal rites,  
 O leader of the Grecian host, who deem'st  
 That thou a mighty conquest hast achieved.  
 Near to my lord's remains, and in that vale,  
 Where down a precipice the torrent foams,  
 My corse shall to the hungry wolves be thrown,  
 The corse of Phœbus' priestess. O ye wreaths  
 Of him whom best of all the gods I loved,  
 Adieu, ye symbols of my holy office,  
 I leave those feasts the scenes of past delight,  
 Torn from my brows avault, for I retain  
 My chastity unsullied still ; the winds  
 To thee shall waft them, O prophetic king.  
 Where is your general's bark, which I am doomed  
 'I' ascend ? the rising breezes shall unfurl  
 Your sails this instant ; for in me ye bear  
 One of the three Eumenides from Troy.  
 Farewell, my mother, weep not for my fate,  
 O my dear country, my heroic brothers,  
 And aged father, in the realms beneath,  
 Ere long shall ye receive me : but victorious  
 Will I descend among the mighty dead,  
 When I have laid th' accursed mansions waste  
 Of our destroyers, Atreus' impious sons.

[*Exeunt* CASSANDRA and TALTHYBIUS.]

CHOR. Attendants of the aged Hecuba,  
 Behold ye not your mistress, how she falls  
 Upon the pavement speechless ? Why neglect  
 To prop her sinking frame ! Ye slothful nymphs,  
 Raise up this woman, whom a weight of years  
 Bows to the dust.

HEC.                    Away, and on this spot  
Allow me, courteous damsels, to remain :  
No longer welcome as in happier days  
Are your kind offices ; this humble posture,  
This fall best suits my present lowly state,  
Best suits what I already have endured  
And still am doomed to suffer. O ye gods,  
In you I call upon no firm allies,  
Yet sure 'tis decent to invoke the gods  
When we by adverse fortune are oppress.  
First, therefore, all the blessings I enjoyed  
Would I recount, hence shall my woes demand  
The greater pity. Born to regal state,  
And with a mighty king in wedlock joined,  
A race of valiant sons did I produce ;  
I speak not of their numbers, but the noblest  
Among the Phrygian youths, such as no Trojan,  
Nor Grecian, nor barbarian dame could boast :  
Them saw I fall beneath the hostile spear,  
And at their tomb the tresses cut : their sire,  
The venerable Priam, I bewailed not,  
From being told of his calamitous fate  
By others, but these eyes beheld him slain,  
E'en at the altar of Hercæan Jove,  
And Ilion taken. I those blooming maids  
Have also lost, whom with maternal love  
I nurtured for some noble husband's bed ;  
They from these arms are torn : nor can I hope  
Or to be seen by them, or e'er to see  
My children more. But last of ail, to crown  
My woes, an aged slave, shall I be borne  
To Greece ; and in such tasks will they employ me  
As are most grievous in the wane of life ;  
Me, who am Hector's mother, at the door  
Stationed to keep the keys, or knead the bread,  
And on the pavement stretch my withered limbs,  
Which erst reposed upon a regal couch,  
And in such tattered vestments, as belie  
My former rank, enwrap my wasted frame.  
Wretch that I am, who, through one woman's nuptials,  
Have borne, and am hereafter doomed to bear,  
Such dreadful ills. O my unhappy daughter,  
Cassandra, whom the gods have rendered frantic,  
With what sad omens hath thy virgin zone  
Been loosed ! and where, Polyxena, art thou,  
O virgin most unfortunate ? but none  
Of all my numerous progeny, or male  
Or female, comes to aid their wretched mother.  
Why, therefore, would ye lift me up ? what room

Is there for hope? me who with tender foot  
 Paced through the streets of Troy, but now a slave,  
 Drag from the palace to the rushy mat  
 And stony pillow, that where'er I fall  
 There may I die, through many, many tears  
 Exhausted. Of the prosperous and the great  
 Pronounce none happy till the hour of death.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Prepare, O Muse, prepare a song  
 Expressive of the fall of Troy;  
 The sympathetic dirge prolong  
 And banish every note of joy.  
 I with loud voice of Ilion's fate will speak,  
 Sing how the foe our ramparts stormed  
 Through the machine their treachery formed,  
 The vehicle of many a daring Greek,  
 Who burst like thunder from that wooden steed,  
 With gorgeous trappings graced, in mimic state,  
 Concealing armed bands, which passed the Scæan gate,  
 They whom such semblance could mislead,  
 The unsuspecting crowd,  
 As on Troy's citadel they stood,  
 Exclaimed; "Henceforth our toils shall cease,  
 Come on, and to Minerva's fane convey  
 This holy image, pledge of peace."  
 What veteran paused? what youth but led the way?  
 Enlivening songs breathed round in notes so sweet,  
 That gladly they received the pestilential cheat.

II.

Then did all Phrygia's race combine  
 Through their devoted gates to bear,  
 Enclosed in the stupendous pine  
 The fraud of Greece, that latent snare,  
 To glut Minerva with Dardanian blood,  
 To pacify th' immortal maid,  
 They the huge mass with ropes conveyed:  
 Thus the tall bark, into the briny flood  
 Too ponderous to be borne, is rolled along:  
 Till they had lodged it in th' ill-omened fane  
 Of her to whom we owe our ruined country's bane.  
 After their toil and festive song,  
 The cloud-wrapped evening spread  
 Her veil o'er each devoted head,  
 Shriill Phrygian voices did resound,

And Libya's flutes accompanied the choir,  
 While nymphs high vaulting from the ground,  
 Mixed their applauses with the chorded lyre,  
 And from each hearth the flames with radiance bright,  
 While heedless warriors slept, dispelled the shades of night.

## III.

Then o'er the genial board, to her who reigns  
 In woodland heights, Diana, child of Jove,  
 I waked the choral strains.  
 But soon there flew a dismal sound  
 Pergamus' wide streets around:  
 The shrieking infant fondly strove  
 To grasp the border of a mother's vest,  
 And with uplifted hands its little fears expressed:  
 Mars from his ambush by Minerva's aid  
 Conspicuous issued and the fray began,  
 Thick gore adown our altars ran,  
 And many a slaughtered youth was laid  
 A headless trunk on the disfigured bed,  
 That Greece might shine with laureate wreaths arrayed,  
 By Troy while fruitless tears are shed.

## ANDROMACHE, HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Seest thou, Andromache, O queen, this way  
 Advancing, wafted in a foreign car?  
 Eager to cling to the maternal breast  
 Close follows her beloved Astyanax,  
 The son of Hector.

HEC. Whither art thou borne,  
 O wretched woman, on a chariot placed  
 'Midst Hector's brazen armour, and those spoils  
 From captive Phrygian chiefs in combat torn,  
 With which Achilles' son from Ilion's siege  
 Triumphant, will the Phthian temples grace?

AND. Our Grecian masters drag me hence.

HEC. Alas!

AND. Why with your groans my anguish strive t' assuage?

HEC. Oh!

AND. I by griefs am compassed——

HEC. Mighty Jove!

AND. And dread vicissitudes of fate.

HEC. My children.

AND. We once were blest.

HEC. Now are those prosperous days  
 No more; and Ilion is no more.

AND. Most wretched!

HEC. My noble sons.

AND. Alas!

HEC. Alas my—— Woes.  
AND.

HEC. O piteous fortune——  
AND. Of the city——  
HEC. Wrapt

In smoke.

AND. Return, my husband, O return,

HEC. In clamorous accents thou invok'st my son,  
Whom Pluto's realms detain, unhappy woman.

AND. Thy consort's tutelary power.

HEC. And thou,

Whose courage long withstood the Grecian host,  
Thou aged father of our numerous race,  
Lead me, O Priam, to the shades beneath.

AND. Presumptuous are such wishes.

HEC. We endure

These grievous woes.

CHOR. While ruin overwhelms  
Our city, for on sorrows have been heaped  
Fresh sorrows, through the will of angry Heaven,  
Since in an evil hour thy son was snatched  
From Pluto, who, determined to avenge  
Those execrable nuptials, with the ground  
Hath levelled Pergamus' beleaguered towers.  
Near Pallas' shrine the corpses of the slain  
Weltering in gore to vultures lie exposed,  
And Ilion droops beneath the servile yoke.  
Thee, O my wretched country, I with tears  
Forsake: e'en now thou view'st the piteous end  
Of all thy woes, and my loved native house.

HEC. My children! O my desolated city!  
Your mother is bereft of every joy.

CHOR. What shrieks, what plaints resound! what  
floods of tears

Stream in our houses! but the dead forget  
Their sorrows, and for ever cease to weep.

HEC. To those who suffer, what a sweet relief  
Do tears afford! the sympathetic Muse  
Inspires their plaints.

AND. O mother of that chief,  
Whose forceful javelin thinned the ranks of Greece,  
Illustrious Hector, seest thou this?

HEC. I see  
The gods delight in raising up the low,  
And ruining the great.

AND. Hence with my son,  
A captive am I hurried; noble birth  
Subject to these vicissitudes now sinks  
Into degrading slavery.

HEC. Uncontrolled  
The power of fate : Cassandra from these arms  
But now with brutal violence was torn !

AND. A second Ajax to thy daughter seems  
To have appeared. Yet hast thou other griefs.

HEC. All bounds, all numbers they exceed ; with ills  
Fresh ills as for pre-eminence contend.

AND. Polyxena, thy daughter, at the tomb  
Of Peleus' son hath breathed her last, a gift  
To the deceased.

HEC. Wretch that I am, alas !  
Too clearly now I understand the riddle  
Which in obscurer terms Talthybius uttered.

AND. I saw her bleed, and lighting from this car  
Covered her with the decent shroud and wailed  
O'er her remains.

HEC. Alas ! alas ! my child  
To bloody altars dragged by impious hands,  
Alas ! alas ! how basely wert thou slain !

AND. Most dreadfully she perished ; yet her lot  
Who perished is more enviable than mine.

HEC. Far different, O my daughter, is the state  
Of them who live, from them who breathe no more :  
For the deceased are nothing : but fair hope,  
While life remains, can never be extinct.

AND. Thou whom, although I sprung not from thy womb,  
I deem a mother, to my cheering words  
With patience listen, they will yield delight  
To thy afflicted soul. 'Tis the same thing  
Ne'er to be born, or die ; but better far  
To die, than to live wretched : for no sorrow  
Affects th' unconscious tenant of the grave.  
But he who once was happy, he who falls  
From fortune's summit down the vale of woe,  
With an afflicted spirit wanders o'er  
The scenes of past delight. In the cold grave,  
Like one who never saw the blessed sun,  
Polyxena remembers not her woes.  
But I who aimed the dextrous shaft, and gained  
An ample portion of renown, have missed  
The mark of happiness. In Hector's house  
I acted as behoves each virtuous dame.  
First, whether slanderous tongues assail or spare  
The matron's chastity, an evil name,  
Her who remains not at her home, pursues :  
Such vain desires I therefore quelled, I stayed  
In my own chamber, a domestic life  
Preferring, and forbore to introduce  
Vain sentimental language, such as gains

Too oft the ear of woman : 'twas enough  
 For me to yield obedience to the voice  
 Of virtue, that best monitor. My lord  
 With placid aspect and a silent tongue  
 I still received, for I that province knew  
 In which I ought to rule, and when to yield  
 Submission to a husband's will. The fame  
 This conduct gained me, reached the Grecian camp,  
 And proved my ruin : for when I became  
 A captive, Neoptolemus resolved  
 To take me to his bed, and in the house  
 Of murderers I to slavery am consigned.  
 If shaking off my Hector's loved remembrance  
 To this new husband I my soul incline,  
 I shall appear perfidious to the dead ;  
 Or, if I hate Achilles' son, become  
 Obnoxious to my lords ; though some assert  
 That one short night can reconcile th' aversion  
 Of any woman to the nuptial couch ;  
 I scorn that widow, reft of her first lord,  
 Who listens to the voice of love, and weds  
 Another. From her comrade torn, the mare  
 Sustains the yoke reluctant, though a brute  
 Dumb and irrational, by nature formed  
 Subordinate to man ; but I in thee  
 Possessed a husband, O my dearest Hector,  
 In wisdom, fortune, and illustrious birth,  
 For me sufficient, great in martial deeds :  
 A spotless virgin-bride, me from the house  
 Of my great father, didst thou first receive ;  
 But thou art slain, and I to Greece must sail  
 A captive, and endure the servile yoke !  
 Is not the death of that Polyxena,  
 Whom thou, O Hecuba, bewail'st, an ill  
 More tolerable than those which I endure ?  
 For hope, who visits every wretch beside,  
 To me ne'er comes ; to me no promised joys  
 Afford a flattering prospect to deceive  
 This anxious bosom ; for 'tis sweet to think  
 E'en of ideal bliss.

CHOR. Thou art involved  
 In the same sufferings, and in plaintive notes  
 Bewailing thy calamity, inform'st me  
 What treatment to expect.

HEC. I ne'er did mount  
 A ship, yet I from pictures and report  
 These matters know : amidst a moderate storm,  
 Such as they hope to weather out, the sailors  
 To save themselves, exert a cheerful toil :



This to the rudder, to the shattered sails  
 That goes, a third laborious at the pump  
 Draws off the rising waters; but if vanquished  
 By the tempestuous ocean's rage, they yield  
 To fortune, and consigning to the waves  
 Their vessel, are at random driven along.  
 Thus I am mute beneath unnumbered woes,  
 Nor can this tongue expatiate, for the gods  
 Such torrents pour as drown my feeble voice!  
 But, O my daughter, cease to name the fate  
 Of slaughtered Hector, whom no tears can save.  
 Pay due attention to thy present lord,  
 With amorous glances and a fond compliance  
 Receiving him; act thus, and thou wilt cheer  
 Our friends, and this my grandson educate  
 A bulwark to fallen Ilion, that his race  
 The city may rebuild, and dwell in Troy.  
 But a fresh topic of discourse ensues.  
 What servant of the Greeks do I behold  
 Again draw near, t' announce some new design?

TALTHYBIUS, ANDROMACHE, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. O thou who erst wert Hector's wife, that bravest  
 Of Phrygians, hate me not; for with reluctance  
 Will I the general sentence of the Greeks  
 And Pelops' progeny, announce.

AND. What means  
 This evil prelude.

TAL. 'Tis decreed thy son—  
 How shall I speak it?

AND. To a separate lord  
 Shall be consigned?

TAL. None of the Grecian chiefs  
 Shall ever o'er Astyanax bear rule.

AND. Must I leave here, him who alone remains  
 Of all that erst was dear to me in Troy?

TAL. Alas! I know not in what terms t' express  
 The miseries that await thee?

AND. I commend  
 Such modesty, provided thou canst speak  
 Aught to afford me comfort.

TAL. They resolve  
 To slay thy son: thou hear'st my dismal errand.

AND. Ah me! thou hast unfolded to these ears  
 An evil, greater than my menaced spousals.

TAL. By his harangues to the assembled Greeks,  
 Ulysses hath prevailed.

AND. Alas! alas!  
 Immoderate are the sorrows I endure.

TAL. Saying they ought not to train up the son  
Of that heroic sire.

AND. May he obtain  
O'er his own children triumphs great as these !

TAL. He from the towers of Ilium must be thrown :  
But I entreat thee, and thou hence shall seem  
More prudent, strive not to withhold thy son,  
But bear thy woes with firmness ; nor, though weak,  
Deem thyself strong ; for thou hast no support,  
And therefore must consider that thy city  
Is overthrown, thy husband is no more,  
Thou art reduced to servitude ; and we  
Are strong enough to combat with one woman :  
O therefore brave not this unequal strife,  
Stoop not to aught that's base, nor yet revile,  
Nor idly scatter curses on thy foes ;  
For if thou utter aught that may provoke  
The anger of the host, thy son will bleed  
Unburied and unwept : but if thou bear  
With silence and composure thy mi-fortunes,  
Funereal honours shall adorn his grave,  
And Greece to thee her lenity extend.

AND. Thee, O my dearest son, thy foes will slay ;  
Soon art thou doomed to leave thy wretched mother.  
What saves the lives of others, the renown  
Of an illustrious sire, to thee will prove  
The cause of death : by this paternal fame  
Art thou attended in an evil hour.  
To me how luckless proved the genial bed,  
And those espousals, that to Hector's house  
First brought me, when I trusted I should bear  
A son, no victim to the ruthless Greeks,  
But an illustrious Asiatic king.  
Weep'st thou, my son ? dost thou perceive thy woes ?  
Why cling to me with timid hands ? Why seize  
My garment ? thus beneath its mother's wings  
The callow bird is sheltered. From the tomb,  
No Hector brandishing his massive spear  
Rushes to save thee ; no intrepid kinsman  
Of thy departed father, nor the might  
Of Phrygian hosts is here : but from aloof  
Borne headlong by a miserable leap,  
Shalt thou pour forth thy latest gasp of life  
Unpitied. Tender burden in the arms  
Of thy fond mother ! what ambrosial odours  
Breathed from thy lips ? I swathed thee to my breast  
In vain, I toiled in vain, and wore away  
My strength with fruitless labours. Yet embrace  
Thy mother once again ; around my neck  
Entwine thine arms, and give one parting kiss.

Ye Greeks, who studiously invent new modes  
 Of unexampled cruelty, why slay  
 This guiltless infant? Helen, O thou daughter  
 Of Tyndarus, never didst thou spring from Jove,  
 But I pronounce thee born of many sires,  
 An evil Genius, Envy, Slaughter, Death,  
 And every evil that from Earth receives  
 Its nourishment; nor dare I to assert  
 That Jove himself begot a pest like thee,  
 Fatal to Greece and each barbarian chief.  
 Perdition overtake thee! for those eyes  
 By their seducing glances have overthrow  
 The Phrygian empire. Bear this child away,  
 And cast him from the turrets if ye list,  
 Then banquet on his quivering flesh: the gods  
 Ordain that I shall perish: nor from him  
 Can I repel the stroke of death. Conceal  
 This wretched form from public view, and plunge me  
 In the ship's hold; for I have lost my son,  
 Such the blest prelude to my nuptial rite.

CHOR. Thy myriads, hapless Ilium, did expire  
 In combat for one woman, to maintain  
 Paris' accursed espousals.

AND. Cease, my child,  
 Fondly to lisp thy wretched mother's name,  
 Ascend the height of thy paternal towers,  
 Whence 'tis by Greece decreed thy parting breath  
 Shall issue. Take him hence. Aloud proclaim  
 This deed ye merciless: that wretch alone  
 Who never knew the blush of virtuous shame,  
 Your sentence can applaud.

[*Exeunt* ANDROMACHE and TALITHYREUS.]

HEC. O child, thou son  
 Of my unhappy Hector, from thy mother  
 And me thou unexpectedly art torn.  
 What can I do, what help afford? for thee  
 I smite this head, this miserable breast;  
 Thus far my power extends. Alas! thou city,  
 And, O my grandson! is there yet a curse  
 Beyond what we have felt? remains there aught  
 To save us from the yawning gulf of ruin?

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

In Salamis' profound retreat  
 Famed for the luxurious treasures of the bee,  
 High raised above th' encircling sea  
 Thou, Telamon, didst fix thy regal seat;

Near to those sacred hills, where spread  
 The olive first its fragrant sprays,  
 To form a garland for Minerva's head,  
 And the Athenian splendor raise :  
 With the famed archer, with Alcmena's son  
 Thou cam'st exulting with vindictive joy ;  
 By your confederate arms was Ilium won,  
 When from thy Greece thou cam'st our city to destroy.

## I. 2.

Repining for the promised steeds,  
 From Greece Alcides led a chosen band,  
 With hostile prowls th' indented strand  
 He reached, and anchored near fair Simois' meads ;  
 Selected from each ship, he led  
 Those who with dextrous hand could wing  
 Th' unerring shaft, till slaughter reached thy head,  
 Laomedon, thou perjured king :  
 Those battlements which Phœbus' self did rear  
 The victor wasted with devouring flame ;  
 Twice o'er Troy's walls hath waved the hostile spear,  
 Twice have insulting shouts announced Dardania's shame.

## II. 1.

Thou bear'st the sparkling wine in vain  
 With step effeminate, O Phrygian boy,  
 Erewhile didst thou approach with joy  
 To fill the goblet of imperial Jove ;  
 For now thy Troy lies levelled with the plain,  
 And its thick smoke ascends the realms above.  
 On th' echoing coast our plaints we vent,  
 As feathered songsters o'er their young bewail,  
 A child or husband these lament,  
 And those behold their captive mothers sail :  
 The founts where thou didst bathe, th' athletic sports,  
 Are now no more. Each blooming grace  
 Sheds charms unheeded o'er thy placid face,  
 And thou frequent'st Heaven's splendid courts.  
 Triumphant Greece hath levelled in the dust  
 The throne where Priam ruled the virtuous and the just.

## II. 2.

With happier auspices, O love,  
 Erst didst thou hover o'er this fruitful plain,  
 Hence caught the gods thy thrilling pain ;  
 By thee embellished, Troy's resplendent towers  
 Reared their proud summits blest by thundering Jove,  
 For our allies were the celestial powers.  
 But I no longer will betray

Heaven's ruler to reproach and biting shame.

The white-winged morn, blest source of day,  
Who cheers the nations with her kindling flame,  
Beheld these walls demolished, and th' abode

Of that dear prince who shared her bed  
In fragments o'er the wasted champaign spread :

While swift along the starry road,

Her golden car his country's guardian bore :

False was each amorous god, and Ilion is no more.

#### MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

MEN. Hail, O ye solar beams, who on this day,  
When I my consort Helen shall regain  
Your radiance shed. For I am he who long  
Endured the toils of battle, Menelaus,  
Attended by the Grecian host. To Troy,  
Not in a woman's cause, as many deem,  
I came, but came to punish him who broke  
The laws of hospitality, and ravished  
My consort from my palace. He hath suffered  
As he deserved, such was the will of Heaven,  
He and his country by the spear of Greece  
Have been destroyed. But I am come to bear  
That Spartan dame away, whom with regret  
I term my consort, though she once was mine.  
But she beneath these tents is with the rest  
Of Phrygia's captives numbered : for the troops  
Whose arms redeemed her, have to me consigned  
That I might either take away, or spare  
Her life, and waft her to the Argive coast.  
I am resolved that Helen shall not bleed  
In Troy, but o'er the foaming waves to Greece  
Will I convey her, and to them whose friends  
Before yon walls were slain, surrender up  
To perish by their vengeance. But with speed  
Enter the tent, thence by that hair defiled  
With murder, O my followers, drag her forth,  
And hither bring : for when a prosperous breeze  
Arises, her will I to Greece convey.

HEC. O thou who mov'st the world, and in this earth  
Hast fixed thy station, whosoe'er thou art,  
Impervious to our reason, whether thou,  
O Jove, art dread necessity which rules  
All nature, or that soul which animates  
The breasts of mortals, thee do I adore,  
For in a silent path thou tread'st and guid'st  
With justice the affairs of man.

MEN.

What means

This innovation in the solemn prayer  
You to the gods address?

HEC. I shall applaud  
The stroke, O Menelaus, if thou slay  
Thy wife; but soon as thou behold'st her, fly,  
Lest she with love ensnare thee. For the eyes  
Of men she captivates, o'erturns whole cities,  
And fires the roofs of lofty palaces,  
She is possessed of such resistless charms;  
Both I and thou and thousands to their cost,  
Alas! are sensible how great her power.

HELEN, MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

HEL. O Menelaus, this is sure a prelude  
To greater horrors. For with brutal hands  
I by your servants from these tents am dragged?  
Too well I know you hate me, yet would learn,  
How you and Greece have of my life disposed.

MEN. Thou by the utmost rigour of the laws  
Hast not been sentenced; but the host, to me  
Whom thou hast wronged, consign thee to be slain.

HEL. May not I answer to these harsh resolves,  
That if I bleed, unjustly shall I bleed?

MEN. I came not hither to debate, but slay thee?

HEC. Hear her, nor let her die, O Menelaus,  
Without this privilege. Me too allow  
To make reply to her defence; for nought  
Of the foul deeds, which she in Troy committed  
Yet know'st thou: if united, the whole tale  
Must force thee to destroy her, and preclude  
All means of her escaping.

MEN. An indulgence  
Like this supposes leisure to attend;  
However, if she have a wish to speak,  
She may: but be assured, that my compliance  
To your request is owing, for such favour  
To her I would not grant.

HEL. Perhaps with me  
Whom you account a foe, you will not deign,  
Whether I seem to utter truth or falsehood,  
To parley. But to each malignant charge  
With which, O Hecuba, I know thou com'st  
Prepared against me, will I make reply,  
And to o'erbalance all that thou canst urge  
Produce recriminations. First, she bore  
Paris, the author of these mischiefs, next  
Did aged Priam ruin Troy and me,  
When erst that infant he forbore to slay,  
That baleful semblance of a flaming torch!

Hear what ensued ; by Paris were the claims  
Of the three rival goddesses decided.  
The gift Minerva proffered ; that commanding  
The Phrygians, he should conquer Greece ; while Juno  
Promised, that he his empire should extend  
From Asia to remotest Europe's bounds,  
If he to her adjudged the golden prize ;  
But Venus, who in rapturous terms extolled  
My charms, engaged that as the great reward  
She would on him bestow me ; to her beauty  
If o'er each goddess he the preference gave.  
Observe the sequel : Venus, o'er Minerva  
And Juno, gained the triumph ; and my nuptials  
Thus far have been a benefit to Greece ;  
Ye are not subject to barbarian lords,  
Crushed by invasion, or tyrannic power.  
But I my ruin owe to what my country  
Hath found thus advantageous, for my charms  
To Paris sold, and branded with disgrace,  
E'en for such deeds as merited a wreath  
To crown these brows. But you may urge, that all  
I have alleged is of no real weight,  
Because by stealth I from your palace fled.  
Accompanied by no mean goddess, came  
That evil genius, sprung from Hecuba,  
Distinguish him by either name you list,  
Paris or Alexander, in your house,  
Whom, O delirious, you behind you left,  
And sailed from Sparta to the Cretan isle.  
Well, be it so. Of my own heart, not you  
I in regard to all that hence ensued  
Will ask the question. What could have induced me,  
Following that stranger, to forsake my home,  
False to my native land ? impute the guilt  
To Venus, and assume a power, beyond  
E'en that of Jove, who rules th' inferior gods  
But yields to her behests. My crime was venial ;  
Yet hence you may allege a specious charge  
Against me ; since to earth's dark vaults the corse  
Of Paris was consigned, no longer bound  
Through Heaven's supreme decree in nuptial chains,  
I to the Grecian fleet should have escaped  
From Ilion's palace ; such was my design :  
This can the guards of Troy's beleaguered towers,  
And sentinels who on the walls were stationed,  
Attest, that oft they caught me, as with ropes  
By stealth I strove to light upon the ground ;  
But a new husband, fierce Deiphobus,  
Obtained me for a wife by brutal force,

Though every Phrygian disapproved. What law  
Can sentence me, whom 'gainst my will he wedded,  
By you, my lord, with justice to be slain?  
But for the benefits through me derived  
To Greece, I in the stead of laureate wreaths  
With slavery am requited. If you wish  
To overcome the gods' supreme behests,  
That very wish were folly.

CHOR.

O my Queen,  
Assert thy children's and thy country's cause,  
'Gainst her persuasive language, for she speaks  
With eloquence, though guilty : curst imposture !

HEC. I those three goddesses will first defend,  
And prove that she has uttered vile untruths :  
For of such madness ne'er can I suspect  
Juno and Pallas that immortal maid,  
As that the first should to barbarian tribes  
Propose to sell her Argos, or Minerva  
To make her Athens subject to the Phrygians :  
Seeking in sportive strife the palm of beauty  
They came to Ida's mount. For through what motive  
Could Juno with such eagerness have wished  
Her charms might triumph ? to obtain a husband  
Greater than Jove ? could Pallas, who besought  
Her sire she ever might remain a virgin,  
Propose to wed some deity ? Forbear  
To represent these goddesses as foolish,  
That thy transgressions may by their example  
Be justified : thou never canst persuade  
The wise. Thou hast presumed t' assert (but this  
Was a ridiculous pretence) that Venus  
Came with my son to Menelaus' house.  
Could she not calmly have abode in Heaven,  
Yet wafted thee and all Amycla's city  
To Ilion ? but the beauty of my son  
Was great, and thy own heart, when thou beheld'st him  
Became thy Venus : for whatever folly  
Prevails, is th' Aphrodite of mankind :  
That of Love's goddess, justly doth commence  
With the same letters as an idiot's name.  
Him didst thou see in a barbaric vest  
With gold refulgent, and thy wanton heart  
Was thence inflamed with love, for thou wert poor  
While yet thou didst reside in Greece ; but leaving  
The Spartan regions, thou didst hope, the city  
Of Troy, with gold o'erflowing, could support  
Thy prodigality ; for the revenues  
Of Menelaus far too scanty proved  
For thy luxuriant appetites : but sayst thou



That Paris bore thee thence by force? what Spartan  
 Saw this? or, with what cries didst thou invoke  
 Castor or Pollux, thy immortal brothers,  
 Who yet on earth remained, nor had ascended  
 The starry height? But since thou cam'st to Troy,  
 And hither the confederate troops of Greece  
 Tracing thy steps, began the bloody strife,  
 Where'er thou heard'st that Menelaus prospered  
 Him didst thou praise, and make my son to grieve  
 That such a mighty rival shared thy love:  
 But if the Trojan army proved victorious,  
 He shrunk into a thing of nought. On Fortune  
 Still didst thou look, still deaf to Virtue's call  
 Follow her banners: yet dost thou assert  
 That thou by cords hast from the lofty towers  
 In secrecy attempted to descend,  
 As if thou here hadst been constrained to stay?  
 Where then wert thou surprised, or sharpened sword,  
 Or ropes preparing, as each generous dame  
 Who sought her former husband would have done?  
 Oft have I counselled thee in many words:  
 "Depart, O daughter, that my sons may take  
 Brides less obnoxious: thee aboard the ships  
 Of Greece, assisting in thy secret flight,  
 Will I convey. O end the war 'twixt Greece  
 And Ilion." But to thee was such advice  
 Unwelcome; for with pride thou in the house  
 Of Paris didst behave thyself, and claim  
 The adoration of barbaric tribes,  
 For this was thy great object. But e'en now  
 Thy charms displaying, clad in gorgeous vest  
 Dost thou go forth, still daring to behold  
 That canopy of Heaven which o'erhangs  
 Thy injured husband: thou detested woman!  
 Whom it had suited, if in tattered vest  
 Shivering, with tresses shorn, in Scythian guise  
 Thou hadst appeared, and for transgressions past  
 Deep smitten with remorse, assumed the blush  
 Of virtuous matrons, not that frontless air.  
 O Menelaus! I will now conclude;  
 By slaying her, prepare for Greece the wreaths  
 It merits, and extend to the whole sex  
 This law, that every woman who betrays  
 Her lord shall die.

CHOR. As that illustrious stem  
 Whence thou deriv'st thy birth, and as thy rank  
 Demand, on thy adulterous wife inflict  
 Just punishment, and purge this foul reproach,  
 This instance of a woman's lust, from Greece;

So shall thy very enemies perceive  
Thou art magnanimous.

MEN. Your thoughts concur  
With mine, that she a willing fugitive  
My palace left and sought a foreign bed ;  
But speaks of Venus merely to disguise  
Her infamy !—Away ! thou shalt be stoned,  
And in one instant for the tedious woes  
Of Greece make full atonement ; I will teach thee  
That thou didst shame me in an evil hour.

HEL. I by those knees entreat you, O forbear  
To slay me, that distraction sent by Heaven  
To me imputing : but forgive me.

HEC. Wrong not  
Thy partners in the war, whom she hath slain ;  
In theirs, and in my children's cause, I sue.

MEN. Desist, thou hoary matron : her entreaties  
Move not this steadfast bosom. O my followers  
Attend her, I command you, to the ships  
Which shall convey her hence.

HEC. Let her not enter  
Thy ship.

MEN. Is she grown heavier than before ?

HEC. He never loved who doth not always love,  
How'er the inclinations of the dame  
He loves may fluctuate.

MEN. All shall be performed  
According to thy wish ; she shall not enter  
My bark : for thou hast uttered wholesome counsels :  
But soon as she in Argos' lands, with shame,  
As she deserves, shall she be slain, and warn  
All women to be chaste. No easy task :  
Yet shall her ruin startle every child  
Of folly, though more vicious still than Helen.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

E'en thus by too severe a doom,  
To Greece, O Jove, hast thou betrayed  
Our shrines, our altars, dropping rich perfume,  
The lambent flame that round the victims played,  
Myrrh's odorous smoke that mounts the skies,  
Yon holy citadel, with Ida's grove  
Around whose oaks the clasping ivy plies,  
Where rivulets meandering rove

Cold and translucent from the drifted snows ;  
 On that high ridge with orient blaze  
 The sun first scatters his enlivening rays,  
 And with celestial flame th' ecstastic priestess glows.

## I. 2.

Each sacrifice, each pious rite,  
 Hence vanished, with th' harmonious choirs  
 Whose accents soothed the languid ear of night,  
 While to the gods we waked our sounding lyres ;  
 Their golden images no more  
 Twelve times each year, on that revolving eve  
 When shines the full-orbed moon, do we adore.  
 Harassed by anxious fears, I grieve,  
 Oft thinking whether thou, O Jove, wilt deign  
 To listen to our piteous moan,  
 High as thou sitt'st on thy celestial throne ;  
 For Troy, by fire consumed, lies level with the plain.

## II. 1.

Thou, O my husband, roam'st a flitting shade,  
 To thee are all funereal rites denied,  
 To thee no lustral drops supplied :  
 But I by the swift bark shall be conveyed  
 Where Argos' cloud-capped fortress stands,  
 Erected by the Cyclops' skilful hands.  
 Before our doors assembling children groan,  
 And oft repeat with clamorous moan  
 A mother's name. Alone shall I be borne  
 Far from thy sight, by the victorious host  
 Of Greece, and leaving Ilion's coast,  
 O'er ocean's azure billows sail forlorn,  
 Either to Salamis, that sacred land,  
 Or where the Isthmian summit o'er two seas  
 A wide extended prospect doth command.  
 Seated in Pelops' straits where Greece the prize decrees.

## II. 2.

Its arduous voyage more than half complete,  
 In the Ægean deep, and near the land,  
 May the red lightning by Jove's hand  
 Winged from the skies with tenfold ruin, meet  
 The bark that wafts me o'er the wave  
 From Troy to Greece a miserable slave.  
 Before the golden mirror wont to braid  
 Her tresses, like a sportive maid,  
 May Helen never reach the Spartan shore.  
 Those household gods to whom she proved untrue,  
 Nor her paternal mansions view,

Enter the streets of Pitane no more,  
 Nor Pallas' temple with its brazen gate;  
 Because her nuptials teemed with foul disgrace  
 To mighty Greece through each confederate state;  
 And hence on Simois' banks were slain Troy's guiltless race

But ha! on this devoted realm are hurled  
 Successive woes. Ye hapless Phrygian dames,  
 Behold the slain Astyanax, whom Greece  
 With rage inhuman from yon towers hath thrown.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*The Body of ASTYANAX borne in upon a Shield.*

TAL. O Hecuba, one ship is left behind  
 To carry the remainder of the spoils  
 Which to Achilles' son have been adjudged,  
 To Phthia's coast. For Neoptolemus,  
 Hearing that recent evils hath befall'n  
 His grandsire Peleus, and that Pelias' son  
 Acastus hath expelled him from his realm,  
 Already hath departed with such speed  
 As would admit of no delay: with him  
 Andromache is gone, for whom I shed  
 A stream of tears, when from the land she went  
 Wailing her country, and to Hector's tomb  
 Her plaints addressing: the victorious chief  
 Hath she entreated, to allow the corse  
 Of your unhappy Hector's son, who perished  
 From Ilion's ramparts thrown, to be interred,  
 Nor bear this shield, the terror of the Greeks,  
 With brass refulgent, which his father placed  
 Before his flank in battle, to the house  
 Of Peleus; nor to that ill-omened chamber  
 Where spousals dire on her arrival wait  
 The mother of the slain; for such an object  
 Must grieve her to behold: but in the stead  
 Of cedar and the monumental stone,  
 Bury the child in this: for she the corse  
 Hath to your arms consigned, that you may grace it  
 With many a fragrant garland, and with vests  
 Such as your present fortunes will afford.  
 For she has sailed, and through his haste her lord  
 Prevented her from lodging in the grave  
 Her son. While thus you his remains adorn  
 We will mark out the spot, and with our spears  
 Dig up the ground. Without delay perform  
 These duties: I one task to you most irksome  
 Have rendered needless: for I lav'd the body,

And cleansed the wounds as o'er Scamander's stream  
I passed. But to prepare for the deceased  
A tomb, I go, that with united toil  
When this we have accomplished, they may steer  
Our vessel homeward. [Exit TALITHYBIUS.

HEC. Place that orb'd shield  
Of Hector on the ground, a spectacle  
Most piteous, and unwelcome to these eyes.  
How, O ye Greeks, whose abject souls belie  
Your brave achievements, trembling at a child,  
Could ye commit this unexampled murder,  
Lest at some future time he should rebuild  
The walls of Ilion? Ye inhuman cowards!  
Our ruin from that fatal hour we date  
When Hector with unnumbered heroes fell.  
But having sacked our city, and destroyed  
Each Phrygian warrior, feared ye such an infant  
The dastard I abhor who meanly shrinks  
Through groundless panic. O for ever loved,  
By what a piteous fate didst thou expire!  
Hadst thou, the champion of thy country, died,  
In riper years, when married, and endued  
With power scarce second to th' immortal gods,  
Thou hadst been blest, if aught on earth deserves  
The name of bliss. But thou, my son, beheld'st  
And hadst a distant knowledge of these joys,  
Which thou didst ne'er experience: for to thee  
The treasures which the palaces of Troy  
Contained, proved useless. O unhappy youth,  
How wert thou hurled from thy paternal walls  
Reared by Apollo's hand: and through those ringlets,  
Which oft thy mother smoothed and kissed, the gore  
Bursts from thy fractured skull: but let me waive  
So horrid a description. O ye hands,  
How in your fingers do ye still retain  
A pleasing sad remembrance of your sire,  
Or why do ye lie motionless before me?  
Dear mouth, full many a babbling accent wont  
To utter, art thou closed by death? Thy voice  
Deceived me erst, when clinging to these garments,  
"O mother," oft didst thou exclaim, "the hair  
Shorn from my brows to thee I will devote,  
Lead round thy tomb my comrades, and address  
Thy hovering ghost in many a plaintive strain."  
Now not to me, alas! dost thou perform  
These duteous offices, but I, bowed down  
With age, an exile, of my children reft,  
Must bury the disfigured corse of thee  
A tender infant. These unnumbered kisses.

My cares in nurturing thee, and broken sleep,  
 Proved fruitless. What inscription can the bard  
 Place o'er thy sepulchre? "The Greeks who feared  
 This infant, slew him!" Such an epitaph  
 Would shame them. As for thee who hast obtained  
 Nought of thy wealth paternal, yet this shield  
 In which thou shalt be buried will be thine.  
 O brazen orb, which erst wert wont to guard  
 The nervous arm of Hector, thou hast lost  
 Thy best possessor: in thy concave circle  
 How is that hero's shape impressed; it bears  
 Marks of that sweat which dropped from Hector's brow,  
 Wearied with toil, when 'gainst thy edge he leaned  
 His cheek. Hence carry, to adorn the corse,  
 Whate'er our present station will afford,  
 For such the fortunes which Jove grants us now  
 As splendour suits not: yet accept these gifts  
 Out of the little I possess. An idiot  
 Is he, who thinking himself blest, exults  
 As if his joys were stable: like a man  
 Smitten with frenzy, changeful fortune bounds  
 Inconstant in her course, now here, now there,  
 Nor is there any one who leads a life  
 Of bliss uninterrupted.

CHOR.

All is ready:

For from the spoils yon Phrygian matrons bear  
 Trappings to grace the dead.

HEC.

On thee, my son,

Not as a victor who with rapid steeds  
 Didst ever reach the goal, or wing the shaft  
 With surer aim, an exercise revered  
 By each unwearied Phrygian youth, thy grandame  
 Places these ornaments which erst were thine:  
 But now hath Helen, by the gods abhorred,  
 Stripped thee of all thou didst possess, and caused  
 Thy murder, and the ruin of our house.

CHOR. Alas! thou hast transpierced my inmost soul,  
 O thou, whom I expected to have seen  
 Troy's mighty ruler.

HEC.

But I now enwrap

Thy body with the vest thou shouldst have worn  
 At Hymen's festive rites, in wedlock joined  
 With Asia's noblest princess. But, O source  
 Of triumphs numberless, dear shield of Hector,  
 Accept these laureate wreaths: for though by death  
 Thou canst not be affected, thou shalt lie  
 Joined with this corse in death; since thou deserv'st  
 More honourable treatment, than the arms  
 Of crafty and malignant Ithacus.

CHOR. Thee, much lamented youth, shall earth receive.  
Now groan, thou wretched mother.

HEC. Oh !

CHOR. Commence  
Those wailings which are uttered o'er the dead.

HEC. Ah me !

CHOR. Alas ! too grievous are thy woes  
To be endured.

HEC. These fillets o'er thy wounds  
I bind, and exercise the healing art

In name and semblance only, but, alas !

Not in reality. Whate'er remains

Unfinished, 'mid the shades beneath, to thee

With tender care thy father will supply.

CHOR. Smite with thy hand thy miserable head  
Till it resound. Alas !

HEC. My dearest comrades.

CHOR. Speak to thy friends ; O Hecuba, what plaints  
Hast thou to utter ?

HEC. Nought but woe for me  
Was by the gods reserved ; beyond all cities  
To them hath Troy been odious. We in vain  
Have offered sacrifice. But had not Jove  
O'erthrown and plunged us in the shades beneath,  
We had remained obscure, we by the Muse  
Had ne'er been sung, nor ever furnished themes  
To future bards. But for this hapless youth  
Go and prepare a grave ; for the deceased  
Is with funereal wreaths already crowned :  
Although these pomp-, I deem, are to the dead  
Of little consequence ; an empty pride  
They in the living serve but to display.

CHOR. Thy wretched mother on thy vital thread  
Had stretch'd forth mighty hopes : though styled most happy  
From thy illustrious birth, thou by a death  
Most horrid didst expire.

HEC. Ha ! who are these  
Whom I behold, in their victorious hands  
Waving those torches o'er the roofs of Troy ?  
E'en now o'er Ilium some fresh woes impend.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. To you I speak, O leaders of the troops  
Who are ordained to burn this town of Priam.  
No longer in your hands without effect  
Reserve those blazing torches : but hurl flames  
On this devoted city, for when Troy  
Is utterly demolished, we shall leave

Its hated shores, exulting. But to you,  
 O Phrygians, I the same behests address;  
 When the shrill trumpet of our chief resounds,  
 Ye to the Grecian navy must repair  
 And from these regions sail. But as for thee,  
 Thou aged and most miserable dame,  
 Follow their steps who from Ulysses come,  
 To whom thy fate consigns thee for a slave  
 Far from thy country in a foreign land.

HEC. Ah, wretched me! this surely is the last,  
 The dire completion this, of all my woes.  
 I leave my country: Ilion's bulwarks flame.  
 Yet, O decrepit feet, with painful haste  
 Bear me along, that I may bid adieu  
 To my unhappy city. Thou, O Troy,  
 Distinguished erst among barbarian tribes  
 By thy superior prowess, soon shalt lose  
 The most illustrious name thou didst acquire:  
 Thee will the flames consume, and us our foes  
 Drag from our home to slavery. O ye gods!  
 Upon the gods yet wherefore should I call?  
 For when we erst invoked them oft, they heard not.  
 Come on, and let us rush amid the flames:  
 For in the ruins of my blazing country  
 'Twill be to me most glorious to expire.

TAL. Thy griefs, O wretched woman, make thee frantic.  
 But lead her hence, neglect not. For Ulysses  
 Obtained this prize, and she to him must go.

HEC. O dread Saturnian king, from whom the Phrygians  
 Derive their origin, dost thou behold  
 Our sufferings, most unworthy of the race  
 Of Dardanus?

CHOR. He surely doth behold:  
 But this great city, city now no more,  
 Is ruined: nought remains of Troy.

HEC. The blaze  
 Of Ilion glares, the fire hath caught the roofs,  
 The streets of Pergamus, and crashing towers.

CHOR. As the light smoke on rapid wing ascends  
 To heaven, how swiftly vanishes fallen Troy:  
 Torrents of flame have laid the palace waste,  
 And o'er its summit waves the hostile spear.

HEC. O fostering soil, that gave my children birth.

CHOR. Alas! alas!

HEC. Yet hear me, O my sons,  
 Your mother's voice distinguish.

CHOR. With loud plaints  
 Thou call'st upon the dead, those aged limbs  
 Stretched on the ground, and scraping up the dust



With either hand. I follow thy example  
Kneeling on earth's cold bosom, and invoke  
My wretched husband in the shades beneath.

HEC. We forcibly are borne——

CHOR.

Most doleful sound!

HEC. To servile roofs.

CHOR.

From my dear native land.

HEC. Slain, uninterred, abandoned by thy friends,  
Thou sure, O Priam, know'st not what I suffer.  
For sable death hath closed thine eyes for ever;  
Though pious, thou by impious hands wert murdered.  
O ye polluted temples of the gods,  
And thou my dearest city.

CHOR.

Ye, alas!

Are by the deadly flame and pointed spear  
Now occupied, on this beloved soil  
Soon shall you lie a heap of nameless ruins :  
For dust, which mixed with smoke, to Heaven ascends,  
No longer will permit me to discern  
Where erst my habitation stood : the land  
Loses its very name, and each memorial  
Of pristine grandeur ; wretched Troy's no more.

HEC. Ye know the fatal truth, ye heard the crash  
Of falling towers. Our city to its basis  
Is shaken. O ye trembling, trembling limbs,  
Support my steps !

TAL.

Depart to end thy days

In servitude. Alas ! thou wretched city !  
Yet to the navy of the Greeks proceed.



# THE CYCLOPS.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

SILENUS.  
CHORUS OF SATYRS.

ULYSSES.  
POLYPHEME THE CYCLOPS.

SCENE.—THE MOUNTAIN OF ÆTNA IN SICILY.

### SILENUS.

O BACCHUS, for thy sake have I endured  
Unnumbered toils, both at the present hour.  
And when these nerves by vigorous youth were strung :  
By Juno first with wild distraction fired,  
Thou didst forsake the mountain nymphs whose care  
Nurtured thy infancy. Next in that war  
With the gigantic progeny of earth,  
Stationed beside thee to sustain thy shield,  
Piercing the buckler of Enceladus,  
I slew him with my lance. Is this a dream ?  
By Jove it is not : for I showed his spoils  
To Bacchus, and the labours I endure  
At present, are so great that they exceed  
E'en those. For since 'gainst thee Saturnia roused,  
To bear thee far away, Etruria's race  
Of impious pirates, I soon caught th' alarm,  
And sailed in quest of thee with all my children :  
Myself the stern ascended, to direct  
The rudder, and each satyr plied an oar  
Till ocean's azure surface with white foam  
Was covered ; thee, O mighty King, they sought. .  
Near Malea's harbour as the vessel rode,  
An eastern blast arose, and to this rock  
Of Ætna, drove us, where the sons of Neptune,  
The one-eyed Cyclops, drenched with human gore,  
Inhabit desert caves ; by one of these  
Were we made captives, and beneath his roof  
To slavery are reduced. Our master's name

Is Polypheme ; instead of Bacchus' orgies  
 We tend the flocks of an accursed Cyclops.  
 My blooming sons, on yonder distant cliffs,  
 Feed the young lambs ; while I at home am stationed  
 The goblet to replenish, and to scrape  
 The rugged floor ; to this unholy lord,  
 A minister of impious festivals :  
 And now must I perform the task assigned  
 Of cleansing with this rake the filthy ground,  
 So shall the cave be fit for his reception,  
 When with his flocks my absent lord returns.  
 But I already see my sons approach,  
 Their fleecy charge conducting. Ha ! what means  
 This uproar ? would ye now renew the dance  
 Of the Sicinnides, as when ye formed  
 The train of amorous Bacchus, and assembled,  
 Charmed by the lute, before Althæa's gate ?

CHORUS, SILENUS.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Sprung from an untainted race,  
 Hardy father of the fold,  
 Why, bounding o'er that craggy space,  
 Roam'st thou desperately bold,  
 Far from the refreshing gale,  
 The verdant herbage of the mead,  
 And sloping channel wont to feed  
 Thy trough with springs that never fail ?  
 Yon caves with bleating lambkins ring,  
 Come, depasture with the flock ;  
 Leave, O leave the dewy rock,  
 Ere this ponderous stone I fling.  
 Thee with speeding horns I call  
 To the Cyclops' lofty stall.

II.

Thou too those swollen udders yield,  
 That thy young ones may be fed,  
 Who, while thou browses o'er the field,  
 Lie neglected in the shed ;  
 Slumbering all the livelong day  
 At length with clamorous plaints they wake,  
 Thou t' appease them wilt forsake  
 Ætna's valleys ever gay.

Young Bromius and his jocund rout  
 Here their orgies ne'er repeat,  
 No thyrsus waves, no drums they beat ;  
 Where the gurgling currents spout,  
 Here no vineyards yield delight,  
 Nor sport the nymphs on Nyssa's height.

## III.

Yet here I chaunt the strains which Bacchus taught,  
 To that Venus whom I sought  
 When with the Mænades I ranged.  
 Where, gentle Evan, dost thou tread  
 Alone, and from thy comrades far estranged,  
 Those auburn ringlets floating from thy head ?  
 Thy votary once, but now a slave  
 To yonder one-eyed Cyclops, I abide  
 In this detested cave :  
 Covered with a goat's vile hide,  
 Thy friend, alas ! exposed to scorn  
 Wanders helpless and forlorn.

SIL. My sons, be silent : bid your followers drive  
 Their flocks into the stony cave.

CHOR. Proceed.

But wherefore, O my father, in this haste ?

SIL. A Grecian vessel, stranded on the coast,  
 I see, and to this cave the mariners  
 Attend their leader, on their heads they bear  
 Those empty vessels which express they want  
 Provisions, with fresh water too their urns  
 Would they replenish. O unhappy strangers !  
 Who are they ? unapprised what lord here rules,  
 Dread Polypheme, they in an evil hour  
 Are entering this inhospitable threshold,  
 And rushing headlong e'en into the jaws  
 Of this fierce Cyclops, gorged with human flesh.  
 But interrupt me not ; I will inquire  
 Whence to Sicilian Etna's mount they came.

## ULYSSES, SILENUS, CHORUS.

ULY. Can ye direct me, strangers, where to find  
 Fresh springs to slake our thirst ; or who will sell  
 Food to the hungry sailor ? But what means  
 That group of satyrs, whom before you came  
 I see assembled ? we at Bacchus' city  
 Seem to have landed. Thee, the elder-born,  
 Thee first I hail.

SIL. Hail! foreigner; acquaint us  
Both who you are, and from what realm you came.

ULY. Ulysses, king of Ithaca, and th' isle  
Of Cephalenè.

SIL. That loquacious man,  
The crafty brood of Sisypheus, full well  
I know.

ULY. Reproach me not, for I am he.

SIL. Whence sailed you to Sicilia?

ULY. From the shores  
Of blazing Ilion, from the war of Troy.

SIL. What, knew you not the way to your own country?

ULY. The tempests violently drove me hither.

SIL. By Heaven, your fortunes are the same with mine.

ULY. What cam'st thou hither too against thy will?

SIL. Yes, in pursuit of those accursed pirates  
Who seized on Bromius.

ULY. But what land is this,  
And by what men inhabited?

SIL. This mountain,  
Called Ætna, overlooks Sicilia's plains.

ULY. Where are the fortresses and lofty towers  
Which guard its peopled cities?

SIL. They exist not.  
No men, O stranger, on these summits dwell.

ULY. But who possess the land, a savage race  
Of beasts?

SIL. The Cyclops occupy these caves,  
They have no houses.

ULY. Governed by what chief?  
Is this a mere democracy?

SIL. They lead  
The life of shepherds, and in no respect  
Yield to each other.

ULY. Do they sow the grain  
Of Ceres, or on what do they subsist?

SIL. On milk, on cheese, and on their sheep, they feed.

ULY. Affords the vine, nectareous juice, the drink  
Bacchus invented?

SIL. No such thing: they dwell  
In an ungrateful soil.

ULY. But do they practise  
The rites of hospitality, and hold  
The stranger sacred?

SIL. They aver the flesh  
Of strangers is a most delicious food.

ULY. What saidst thou, banquet they on human flesh?

SIL. Here no man lands who is not doomed to bleed.

ULY. Where is this Cyclops, in the cave?

SIL. He went  
To Ætna's summit, with his hounds to trace  
The savage beasts.

ULY. But know'st thou by what means  
We from this region may escape?

SIL. I know not.  
But, O Ulysses, I'll do everything  
To serve you.

ULY. Sell us bread, supply our want.

SIL. I told you we have nothing here but flesh.

ULY. By this, sharp hunger, which makes all things sweet,  
May be assuaged.

SIL. Cheese from the press, and milk  
Of heifers too.

ULY. Produce them: while the day  
Yet lasts, should we conclude our merchandise.

SIL. With how much gold will you repay me? Speak.

ULY. No gold I bring, but Bacchus' cheering juice.

SIL. My dearest friend, you mention what we long  
Have stood in need of.

ULY. This enchanting liquor  
Did Maron, offspring of the courteous god,  
On us bestow.

SIL. Whom erst, while yet a boy  
I in these arms sustained.

ULY. The son of Bacchus,  
T' inform thee more minutely who he is.

SIL. Aboard the ship, or have you hither brought it?

ULY. Here is the cask, old man, which thou perceiv'st  
Contains the wine.

SIL. It hardly is a sup.

ULY. But we have twice as much as this will yield.

SIL. A most delicious spring is that you named.

ULY. Shall I first treat thee with some wine unmixed,  
That thou may'st taste?

SIL. Well judged: this specimen  
Soon will induce me to conclude the purchase.

ULY. A cup too I have brought as well as cask.

SIL. Pour forth, that I may drink, and recollect  
The grateful taste of wine.

ULY. Look there!

SIL. Ye gods!  
How beauteous is its odour!

ULY. Hast thou seen it?

SIL. By Jove I have not, but I smell its charms.

ULY. Taste, nor to words alone confine thy praise.

SIL. Ha! ha! now Bacchus to the choral dance  
Invites me.

ULY. Hath it moistened well thy palate?

SIL. So well as e'en to reach my fingers' ends.

ULY. Beside all this, shall money too be thine.

SIL. Empty the vessel, and reserve your gold.

ULY. Bring forth the cheese and lambs.

SIL.

That will I do,

Regardless of my lord, because I wish

To drain one goblet of this wine, and give

The flocks of all the Cyclops in its stead.

I'd from Leucadè, when completely drunk,

Into the ocean take a lover's leap,

Shutting my eyes. For he who, when he quaffs

The mantling bowl, exults not, is a madman.

Through wine new joys our wanton bosoms fire,

With eager arms we clasp the yielding fair,

And in the giddy dance forget each ill

That heretofore assailed us. So I kiss

The rich potation; let the stupid Cyclops

Weep with that central eye which in his front

Glares horribly.

[Exit SILENUS.]

CHOR. Attend: for we must hold

A long confabulation, O Ulysses.

ULY. We meet each other like old friends.

CHOR.

Was Troy

By you subdued? was Helen taken captive?

ULY. And the whole house of Priam we laid waste.

CHOR. When ye had seized on that transcendent fair,

Did ye then all enjoy her in your turn,

Because she loves variety of husbands?

False to her vows, when she the painted greaves

Around the legs of Paris, on his neck

The golden chain, beheld, with love deep smitten

From Menelaus, best of men, she fled.

Ah! would to Heaven no women had been born

But such as were reserved for my embraces.

SILENUS *returning*, ULYSSES, CHORUS.

SIL. Here, King Ulysses, is the shepherd's food:

Banquet on bleating lambs, and bear away

As many curdled cheeses as you can;

But from these caverns with your utmost speed

Depart, when ye have given me in return

The clustering vine's rich juice which Bacchus loves.

ULY. The Cyclops comes. What shall we do? Old man,  
We are undone. Ah, whither can we fly?

SIL. Ye may conceal yourselves beneath that rock.

ULY. Most dangerous is the scheme thou hast proposed.  
To rush into the toils.

SIL. No danger truly;

For in this rock is many a hiding-place.

ULY. Not thus: indignant Troy might groan indeed



If from a single arm we basely fled.  
 Oft with my shield against a countless band  
 Of Phrygians have I fought. If we must die,  
 Let us die nobly : or with life maintain  
 The fame we erst in dubious fields acquired.

POLYPHEME, SILENUS, CHORUS, ULYSSES.

POL. What mean these transports, this insensate uproar,  
 These Bacchanalian orgies? Nyssa's god,  
 The brazen timbrel, and the rattling drum,  
 Are distant from these regions. In the cave  
 How fare the new-year'd lambskins? do they suck,  
 Or follow they the ewes? have ye prepared  
 In wicker vats the cheeses? No reply?  
 This club shall make ye weep forthwith. Look up,  
 Not on the ground.

CHOR. We lift our dazzled eyes  
 To Jove himself; I view the twinkling stars  
 And bright Orion.

POL. Is my dinner ready?

CHOR. It is. Prepare your jaws for mastication.

POL. Are the bowls filled with milk?

CHOR. They overflow,  
 And you may drink whole hog-heads if you will.

POL. Of sheep, or cows, or mixed?

CHOR. Whate'er you please;  
 But swallow not me too.

POL. No certainly;  
 For ye would foot it in my tortured paunch,  
 And kill me with those antics. But what crowd  
 Behold I in the stalls? Some thieves or pirates  
 Are landed: at the mouth of yonder cave  
 The lambs are bound with osiers, on the floor  
 The cheese-press scattered lies, and the bald head  
 Of this old man is swoll'n with many bruises.

SIL. Ah me! into a fever I am beaten.

POL. By whom, old man, who smote thy hoary head?

SIL. O Cyclops, by these ruffians whom I hindered  
 From carrying off their plunder.

POL. Know they not  
 I am a god sprung from the blest immortals?

SIL. All this I told them, yet they seized your goods,  
 Eat up your cheese without my leave, dragged forth  
 The lambs, declared they would exhibit you  
 In a huge collar of three cubits long,  
 Closely imprisoned, and before that eye,  
 Which in the centre of your forehead glares,  
 Bore out your entrails, soundly scourge your hide,  
 Then throw you into their swift vessel's hold  
 Tied hand and foot, and sell you, with a lever

To heave up ponderous stones, or to the ground  
Level some door.

POL.                               Indeed ! go whet the knives  
Without delay, collect a mighty pile  
Of wood, and light it up with flaming brands,  
They shall be slain immediately, and broiled  
To satisfy my appetite with viands  
Hot from the coals. The rest shall be well sodden ;  
For I am sated with unsavoury beasts,  
Enough on lions have I banqueted  
And stags that haunt this mountain : but 'tis long  
Since human flesh I tasted.

SIL.                               My dread lord,  
Variety is sweet : no other strangers  
Have reached of late these solitary caves.

ULY. O Cyclops, hear the strangers also speak,  
In their defence. We, wanting to buy food,  
Came to your caverns from our anchored bark.  
These lambs to us he bartered for our wine,  
And of his own accord, when he had drank,  
Yielded them up ; no violence was used :  
But the account he gives is utter falsehood,  
Since he was caught without your privity  
Vending your goods.

SIL.                               I ? curses on your head !

ULY. If I have uttered an untruth.

SIL.                               By Neptune  
Your sire, O Cyclops, by great Triton, Nereus,  
Calypso, Nereus' daughters, by the waves,  
And all the race of fishes, I protest,  
Most beauteous Cyclops, my dear little lord,  
I sold not to the foreigners your goods ;  
May swift perdition, if I did, o'ertake  
These sinners here, my children, whom I love  
Beyond expression.

CHOR.                           Curb thy tongue : I saw thee  
Vending thy lord's possessions to the strangers :  
If I speak falsehood, may our father perish !  
But injure not these foreigners.

POL.                               Ye lie ;  
For I in him much rather would confide  
Than Rhadamanthus, and pronounce that he  
Is a more upright judge. But I to them  
Some questions would propose. Whence sailed, strangers ?  
Where is your country and your native town ?

ULY. We in the realms of Ithaca were born ;  
But after we had laid Troy's bulwarks waste,  
O Cyclops, by those howling winds which raise  
The ocean's boisterous surges, to your coast  
Our vessel was impelled.

POL. Are ye the men  
Who worthless Helen's ravisher pursued  
To Ithon's turrets on Scamander's bank?

ULY. The same: most dreadful toils have we endured.

POL. Dishonourable warfare: in the cruise  
Of one vile woman ye to Paros sailed.

ULY. Such was the will of Jove: no man charge  
The fault. But we to you, O generous son

Of ocean's god, our earnest prayers address,  
Nor fear with honest freedom to remonstrate  
That we your hapless friends, who to these coaves

For refuge fly, deserve not to be slain  
To satiate with accursed human food

Your appetite: far to your sire, great king,  
Full many a temple on the shores of Greece

Have we erected; Tænarus' sacred haven  
To him remains inviolate, the cliff

Of Mælea, Sunium for its silver mines  
Renowned, on whose steep promontory stands  
Minerva's fane, and the Gerastian bow.

But those intolerable wrongs which Greece  
From Troy had suffered, could we not forgive.

Our triumph interests you, who in a land  
With Greece connected, dwell, beneath the rock  
Of flaming Ætna. Let these golden laws

Which all mankind obey, on you prevail  
To change your ruidless purpose, and admit

Your suppliants to a conference, who have long  
Endured the perils of the billowy deep;

With hospitable gifts, and change of raiment  
Assist us, nor affix our quivering limbs

On spits, to sate your gluttony. Enough  
Hath Priam's land depopulated Greece.

Whole myriads have in fighting fields been slain;  
The widowed bride, the aged childless matron,

And hoary sire, both Troy made ever wretched.  
But if you burn, and at your hateful feasts

Devour the scattered relics of our host,

Whether shall any Grecian turn? but listen

To my persuasion, Cyclops, and control

Your gluttony. What piety enjoins,

Prefer to this defiance of the gods:

For ruin oft attends unrighteous gain.

SIL. Leave not the smallest morsel of his flesh;

Take my advice, and if you eat his tongue,

You certainly, O Cyclops, will become

A most accomplished orator.

POL. Vile craft,

Wealth is the deity the wise adore,

But all things else are unsubstantial boasts.

And specious words alone. I nought regard  
 Those promontories sacred to my sire.  
 Why dost thou talk of them? I tremble not,  
 O stranger, at the thunderbolts of Jove,  
 Him I account not a more powerful god  
 Than I am, nor henceforth will heed him : hear  
 My reasons ; when he from the skies sends down  
 The rain, secure from its inclemency  
 Beneath this rock I dwell, and make a feast  
 On roasted calves, or on the savage prey,  
 Stretched at my length supine, then drain a pitcher  
 Of milk, and emulate the thunder's sound.  
 When Thracian Boreas pours his flaky showers,  
 In hides of beasts my body I enwrap,  
 Approach the fire, nor heed the pelting snows.  
 Compelled by strong necessity, the ground  
 Produces grass, and nourishes my herds,  
 Whom, to no other god except myself,  
 And to this belly, greatest of the gods,  
 I sacrifice. Because each day to eat,  
 To drink, and feel no grief, is bliss supreme,  
 The Heaven, the object of the wise man's worship.  
 I leave those gloomy lawgivers to weep,  
 Who by their harsh impertinent restrictions  
 Have chequered human life ; but will indulge  
 My genius, and devour thee. That my conduct  
 May be exempt from blame, thou shalt receive  
 As pledges of our hospitality  
 The fire, and that hereditary cauldron  
 Well heated, which shall boil thy flesh : walk in,  
 Ye shall adorn my table, and produce  
 Delicious meals to cheer my gloomy cave,  
 Such as a god can relish.

ULY.

I have 'scaped,

Alas ! each danger at the siege of Troy,  
 'Scaped the tempestuous ocean ; but in vain  
 Attempt to soften the un pitying heart  
 Of him who spurns all laws. Now, sacred queen,  
 Daughter of Jove, now aid me, O Minerva,  
 For I such perils as far, far exceed  
 My Phrygian toils, encounter : and, O Jove,  
 Dread guardian of each hospitable rite,  
 Who sitt'st enthroned above the radiant stars,  
 Look down : for if thou view not this, though deemed  
 Omnipotent, thou art a thing of nought.

*Exeunt POLYPHEME, ULYSSES, and SILENUS.*

- 1st SEMICHOR. That insatiate throat expand,  
 Boiled and roast are now at hand  
 For thee, O Cyclops, to devour :  
 From the coals in evil hour

Yet reeking, shall thy teeth divide  
 The limbs of each unhappy guest,  
 To thy table served when dressed  
 In dishes formed of shaggy hide.  
 O betray me not, my friend,  
 For I on you alone depend :  
 Now approach the shades of night,  
 Launch the bark, and aid our flight.

2nd SEMICHOR. Thou cave, and ye unholy rites,  
 Adieu, the Cyclops' cursed delights,  
 Who on his prisoners wont to feed,  
 Hath banished pity from his breast.  
 Inhuman execrable deed !  
 On his own hearth, the suppliant guest,  
 Regardless of the Lares' guardian powers,  
 Now he slays, and now devours :  
 Hot from the coals, with odious jaws,  
 Human flesh the miscreant gnaws.

ULYSSES, CHORUS.

ULY. How, mighty Jove ! shall I express myself ?  
 The dreadful scenes I in the cave have viewed  
 Are so astonishing, they more resemble  
 Some fable than the actions of a man.

CHOR. What now, Ulysses, on your loved companions  
 Feasts this most impious Cyclops ?

ULY. Two, the fattest,  
 Having well viewed and poised them in his hands——

CHOR. How did you bear, O miserable man,  
 These cruel outrages ?

ULY. Soon as we entered  
 The rocky cave, he lighted first the fire,  
 On the wide blaze heaped trunks of lofty oaks,  
 A load sufficient for three wains to bear ;  
 Then near the flaming hearth, upon the ground,  
 Arranged his couch of pine leaves, filled a bowl,  
 Holding about ten firkins, with the milk  
 Of heifers, and beside it placed a jug  
 Adorned with ivy, the circumference seemed  
 Three spacious el's, the depth no less than four :  
 Then made his cauldron bubble, and reached down  
 Spits burnt at the extremities, and polished  
 Not with a knife, but hatchets ; *Ætna* furnished  
 Such instruments for sacrifice, the stems  
 Of thorn. No sooner had the hellish cook  
 Finished his preparations, than he seized  
 Two of my valiant comrades, whom he slew  
 With calm deliberation ; one he cast  
 Into the hollow cauldron ; from the ground  
 Then lifting up his fellow by the foot

Dashed out his brains against the pointed rock ;  
 Severing his flesh with an enormous knife,  
 Part at the fire he roasted, and to boil,  
 His other joints into the cauldron threw.  
 But I, though from these eyes full many a tear  
 Burst forth, approached the Cyclops, and on him  
 Attended, while my friends, like timorous birds  
 Lurked in the distant crannies of the rock,  
 And all the blood forsook their pallid frame.  
 When sated with his feast the monster lay  
 Supine, and snored, a thought by Heaven inspired  
 Entered this bosom ; having filled a cup  
 With Maron's juice unmingled, I to him  
 Bore it, that he might drink ; and cried, " Behold,  
 O Cyclops, son of Neptune, how divine  
 The beverage which our Grecian vineyards yield  
 The stream of Bacchus." But already gulted  
 With his abominable food, he seized  
 And emptied the whole bumper at one draught,  
 Then lifting up, in token of applause,  
 His hand : " O dearest stranger," he exclaimed,  
 " To a delicious banquet thou hast added  
 Delicious wine." Perceiving he grew merry  
 I plied him with a second cup, well knowing  
 That wine will stagger him : he soon shall feel  
 Such punishment as he deserves. He sung ;  
 I poured forth more and more, to warm his bowels  
 With strong potations : 'midst my weeping crew  
 He makes the cave with unharmonious strains  
 Re-echo. But I silently came forth,  
 And, if ye give consent, design to save  
 You, and myself. Say, therefore, will ye fly  
 From this unsocial monster, and reside  
 With Grecian maids beneath the roofs of Bacchus ?  
 Your sire within approves of these proposals :  
 But now grown feeble and o'ercharged with wine,  
 Attracted by the goblet, as if birdlime  
 Had smeared his wings, he wavers. But with me  
 Do thou preserve thyself, for thou art young :  
 And I to Bacchus, to thy ancient friend  
 Far different from this Cyclops, will restore thee.

CHOR. My dearest friend, O could we see that day,  
 And 'scape yon impious monster ! for we long  
 Have been deprived of the enlivening bowl,  
 Nor entertain a single hope of freedom.

ULY. Now hear the means by which I can requite  
 This odious savage, and thou too mayst 'scape  
 From servitude.

CHOR. Speak, for we should not hear

The sound of Asi's harp with more delight,  
Than the glad tidings of the Cyclops' death.

ULY. By wine enlivened, he resolves to go  
And revel with his brethren.

CHOR. I perceive  
You mean to seize and kill him when alone,  
By some enchantment, or to dash him headlong  
From the steep rock.

ULY. I have no such design  
As these: on craft alone my plan depends.

CHOR. How then will you proceed? For we long since  
Have heard that you for wisdom are renowned.

ULY. I will deter him from the feast, and say  
He must not portion out among the Cyclops  
This liquor, but reserve it for himself  
And lead a joyous life: when overcome  
By Bacchus' gifts he sleeps, this sword shall point  
An olive pole, which to my purpose suited  
Lies in the cave: I in the fire will heat,  
And, when it flames, direct the hissing brand  
Ful on the Cyclops' forehead, to extinguish  
The orb of sight. As when some artist frames  
A nautic structure, he by thongs directs  
The ponderous auger: thus will I whirl round  
Within the Cyclops' eye the kindled staff,  
And scorch his visual nerve.

CHOR. Ho! I rejoice;  
This blest invention almost makes me frantic.

ULY. Thee, and thy friends, and thy decrepit sire,  
This done, aboard my vessel will I place,  
And from this region with a double tier  
Of oars convey.

CHOR. But is it possible  
That I, as if dread Jove were my confederate,  
Shall guide the well-poised brand, and of his eyesight  
Deprive the monster? For I wish to share  
In such assassination.

ULY. I expect  
Your aid: the brand is weighty, and requires  
Our social efforts.

CHOR. I'd sustain a load  
Equal to what a hundred teams convey,  
Could I dash out the cursed Cyclops' eye  
E'en as a swarm of wasps.

ULY. Be silent now;  
(Ye know my stratagem) and at my bidding  
To those who o'er th' adventurous scheme preside  
Yield prompt obedience: for I scorn to leave  
My friends within, and save this single life.



True, 'scape I might, already having passed  
 The cavern's deep recess : but it were mean  
 If I should extricate myself alone,  
 False to the faithful partners of my voyage.

[Exit ULYSSES.]

CHOR. Who first, who next, with steadfast hand  
 Ordained to guide the flaming brand,  
 The Cyclops' radiant eye shall pierce?

1st SEMICHOR. Silence ! for from within a song  
 Bursts on my ear in tuneless verse,  
 Insensate minstrel, doomed ere long  
 This luxurious meal to rue,  
 He staggers from yon rocky cave.  
 Him let us teach who never knew  
 How at the banquet to behave,  
 Outrageous and unmannered hind,  
 Soon shall he totally be blind.

2nd SEMICHOR. Thrice blest is he, in careless play  
 'Midst Bacchus' orgies ever gay,  
 Stretched near the social board whence glides  
 The vine's rich juice in purple tides,  
 Who fondly clasps with eager arms  
 The consenting virgin's charms ;  
 Rich perfumes conspire to shed  
 Sweetest odours on his head,  
 While enamoured of the fair  
 He wantons with her auburn hair.  
 But hark ! for surely 'tis our mate  
 Exclaiming, " Who will ope the gate ? "

POLYPHEME, ULYSSES, SILENUS, CHORUS.

POL. Ha ! ha ! I am replete with wine, the banquet  
 Hath cheered my soul : like a well-freighted ship  
 My stomach's with abundant viands stowed  
 Up to my very chin. This smiling turf  
 Invites me to partake a vernal feast  
 With my Cyclopean brothers. Stranger, bring  
 That vessel from the cave. [Exit ULYSSES.]

CHOR. With bright-eyed grace  
 Our master issues from his spacious hall ;  
 (Some god approves—the kindled torch—) that form  
 Equals the lustre of a blooming nymph  
 Fresh from the dripping caverns of the main.  
 Soon shall the variegated wreath adorn  
 Your temples.

ULY. [returning.] Hear me, Cyclops ; well I know  
 Th' effect of this potation, Bacchus' gift,  
 Which I to you dispensed.



POL. Yet say what sort  
Of god is Bacchus by his votaries deemed?

ULY. The greatest source of pleasure to mankind.

POL. I therefore to my palate find it sweet.

ULY. A god like this to no man will do wrong.

POL. But in a bottle how can any god  
Delight to dwell?

ULY. In whatsoever place  
We lodge him, the benignant power resides.

POL. The skins of goats are an unseemly lodging  
For deities.

ULY. If you admire the wine,  
Why quarrel with its case?

POL. Those filthy hides  
I utterly detest, but love the liquor.

ULY. Stay here; drink, drink, O Cyclops, and be gay.

POL. This luscious beverage, must I not impart  
To cheer my brothers?

ULY. Keep it to yourself  
And you shall seem more honourable.

POL. More useful,  
If I distribute largely to my friends.

ULY. Broils, taunts, and discord from the banquet rise.

POL. Though I am fuddled, no man dares to touch me.

ULY. He who hath drunk too freely, O my friend,  
Ought to remain at home.

POL. Devoid of reason  
Is he who when he drinks pays no regard  
To mirth and to good-fellowship.

ULY. More wise,  
O'ercharged with wine, who ventures not abroad.

POL. Shall we stay here? What think'st thou, O  
Silenus?

SIL. With all my heart. What need, for our carousals,  
Of a more numerous company?

POL. The ground  
Beneath our feet, a flowery turf adorns.

SIL. O how delightful 'tis to drink, and bask  
Here in the sunshine: on this grassy couch  
Beside me take your seat.

POL. Why dost thou place  
The cup behind my elbow?

SIL. Lest some stranger  
Should come and snatch the precious boon away.

POL. Thou mean'st to tope clandestinely: between us  
Here let it stand. O stranger, by what name  
Say shall I call thee?

ULY. Noman is my name.  
But for what favour shall I praise your kindness?

POL. The last of all the crew will I devour.

ULY. A wondrous privilege is this, O Cyclops,  
Which on the stranger you bestow.

POL. What mean'st thou?  
Ha! art thou drinking up the wine by stealth?

SIL. Only the gentle Bacchus gave that kiss,  
Because I look so blooming.

POL. Thou shalt weep,  
Because thy lips were to the wine applied,  
Nor did it seek thy mouth.

SIL. Not thus, by Jove;  
I drank because the generous god of wine  
Declared that he admired me for my beauty.

POL. Pour forth; give me a bumper.

SIL. I must taste  
To see what mixture it requires.

POL. Damnation!  
Give it me pure.

SIL. Not so, the heavens forbid!  
Till you the wreath bind on your ample front,  
And I again have tasted.

POL. What a knave  
Is this my cupbearer!

SIL. Accuse me not;  
The wine is sweet: you ought to wipe your mouth  
Before you drink.

POL. My lips and beard are clean.

SIL. Loll thus upon your elbow with a grace,  
Drink as you see me drink, and imitate  
My every gesture.

POL. What art thou about?

SIL. I swallowed then a most delicious bumper.

POL. Take thou the cask, O stranger, and perform  
The office of my cupbearer.

ULY. These hands  
Have been accustomed to the pleasing office.

POL. Now pour it forth.

ULY. Be silent: I obey.

POL. Thou hast proposed a difficult restraint  
To him who largely drinks.

ULY. Now drain the bowl;  
Leave nought behind: the toper must not prate  
Before his liquor's ended.

POL. In the vine  
There's wisdom.

ULY. When to plenteous food you add  
An equal share of liquor, and well drench  
The throat beyond what thirst demands, you sink  
Into sweet sleep: but if you leave behind

Aught of th' unfinished beverage in your cup,  
Bacchus will scorch your entrails.

POL. 'Tis a mercy  
How I swam out ; the very heavens whirl round  
Mingled with earth. I view Jove's throne sublime,  
And the whole synod of encircling gods.  
Were all the Graces to solicit me,  
I would not kiss them : Ganymede himself  
Appears in matchless beauty.

SIL. I, O Cyclops,  
Am Jove's own Ganymede.

POL. By Heaven thou art !  
Whom from the realms of Dardanus I bore.

[Exit POLYPHEME.]

SIL. Ruin awaits me.

CHOR. Dost thou loathe him now

SIL. Ah me ! I from this sleep shall soon behold  
The most accursed effects. [Exit SILENUS.]

ULY. Come on, ye sons  
Of Bacchus, generous youths ; for soon dissolved  
In slumber shall the monster from those jaws  
Vomit forth flesh, within the hall now smokes  
The brand, and nought remains but to burn out  
The Cyclops' eye : act only like a man.

CHOR. The firmness of my soul shall equal rocks  
And adamant. But go into the cave  
With speed, before tumultuous sounds assail  
Our aged father's ears ; for to effect  
Your purpose, all is ready.

ULY. Vulcan, king  
Of Ætna, from this impious pest, who haunts  
Thy sacred mountain, free thyself at once,  
By burning out his glaring eye ; and thou  
Nurtured by sable night, O sleep, invade  
With thy resistless force this beast abhorred  
By Heaven ; nor after all the glorious deeds  
Achieved at Ilion, with his faithful sailors,  
Destroy Ulysses' self, by him who heeds  
Nor god nor mortal. Else must we hold fortune  
A goddess, and all other deities  
Inferior to resistless fortune's power. [Exit ULYSSES.]

CHOR. The neck of him who slays his guest,  
With burning pincers shall be prest,  
And fire bereaving him of sight  
Soon shall destroy that orb of light,  
Within the embers near at hand  
Lies concealed a smoking brand,  
Torn from its parental tree.  
Maron, we depend on thee ;

May th' exasperated foe  
 With success direct the blow !  
 May the Cyclops lose his eye,  
 And curse his ill-timed jollity !  
 Thee, Bromius, how I long to meet  
 Thy front adorned with ivy twine ;  
 Leaving this abhorred retreat.  
 Ah, when shall such delight be mine ?

ULYSSES, CHORUS.

ULY. Be silent, O ye savages, restrain  
 Those clamorous tongues : by Heaven ye shall not breathe,  
 Nor wink your eyes, nor cough, lest ye awaken  
 This pest, the Cyclops, ere he of his eyesight  
 Is by the fire bereft.

CHOR. We will be silent,  
 And in our jaws confine the very air.

ULY. The ponderous weapon seize with dauntless hands,  
 Entering the cavern ; for 'tis fully heated.

CHOR. Will you not give directions who shall first  
 Manage the glowing lever, and burn out  
 The Cyclops' eye, that in one common fortune  
 We all may share.

1st SEMICHOR. We who before the portals  
 Are stationed, are not tall enough to drive  
 Full on its destined mark the hissing brand.

2nd SEMICHOR. But I am with a sudden lameness seized.

1st SEMICHOR. The same calamity which you experience  
 To me hath also happened ; for my feet  
 Are by convulsions tortured, though the cause  
 I know not.

ULY. If ye feel such dreadful spasms,  
 How can ye stand ?

CHOR. Our eyes are also filled  
 With dust or ashes.

ULY. These allies of mine  
 Are worthless cowards.

CHOR. We forsooth want courage  
 Because we feel compassion for our shoulders,  
 Nor would be beaten till our teeth drop out.  
 But I a magic incantation know,  
 Devised by Orpheus, which hath such effect,  
 That of its own accord the brand shall pierce  
 The skull of him, the one-eyed son of earth.

ULY. Long have I known ye are by nature such ;  
 But more than ever do I know you now.  
 On my own friends I therefore must rely.  
 Yet if thou hast no vigour in that arm,  
 Exhort my drooping friends to act with valour  
 And let thy counsels aid the bold emprise. [*Exit ULYSSES.*]

CHOR. Such be my province : we this Carian's life  
Will hazard. But my counsels shall induce them  
To burn the Cyclops. Ho ! with courage whirl  
The brand, delay not to scorch out the eye  
Of him who banquets on the stranger's flesh.  
With fire assail the savage, pierce the front  
Of Ætna's shepherd, lest, with anguish stung,  
On you he perpetrate some deed of horror.

POL. [*within.*] Ah me ! by burning coals I am deprived  
Of eyesight.

CHOR. That was a melodious pæan :  
To me, O Cyclops, sing th' enchanting strain.

POLYPHEME, CHORUS.

POL. Ah, how am I insulted and destroyed !  
Yet shall ye never from this hollow rock  
Escape triumphant, O ye things of nought :  
For in my station rooted, where this cleft  
Opens a door, will I spread forth my hands  
And stop your passage !

CHOR. Ha ! what means these outcries,  
O Cyclops ?

POL. I am ruined.

CHOR. You appear  
To have much been abused.

POL. Deplorably.

CHOR. When fuddled, did you fall amid burning coals ?

POL. Noman hath ruined me.

CHOR. To you then no one  
Hath offered any wrong.

POL. These lids hath Noman  
Deprived of sight.

CHOR. You therefore are not blind.

POL. Would thou couldst see as little.

CHOR. How can no man  
Put out your eye ?

POL. Thou art disposed to jest.  
But where is Noman ?

CHOR. He is nowhere, Cyclops.

POL. That execrable stranger, mark me well,  
Is author of my ruin, who produced  
The fraudulent draught, and burned my visual nerves.

CHOR. Wine is invincible.

POL. By all the gods,  
Answer me I conjure you ; did they fly,  
Or are they here within ?

CHOR. They on the top  
Of yonder rock which screens them from your reach,  
In silence take their stand.

POL. But on which side ?

CHOR. Your right.

POL. Where, where?

CHOR. Upon that very rock.

Have you yet caught them?

POL. To mischance succeeds

Mischance; I have fallen down and cracked my skull.

CHOR. They 'scape you now.

POL. Ye misinformed me sure;

They are not here.

CHOR. I say not that they are.

POL. Where then?

CHOR. They wheel around you on your left.

POL. Ah me! I am derided, ye but mock

At my affliction.

CHOR. They are there no longer;

But Noman stands before you.

POL. O thou villain,

Where art thou?

ULYSSES, POLYPHEME, CHORUS.

ULY. Keeping cautiously aloof,

Thus I, Ulysses, guard my threatened life.

POL. What saidst thou? Wherefore hast thou changed  
thy name

T' assume a new one?

ULY. Me my father named

Ulysses. It was destined you should suffer

A just requital for your impious feast;

For I in vain had with consuming flames

Laid Ilion waste, had I forborne t' avenge

On you the murder of my valiant friends.

POL. Now is that ancient oracle, alas!

Accomplished, which foretold, that I by thee,

On thy return from Troy, should be deprived

Of sight: but that thou also for a deed

So cruel, shalt be punished, and full long

Endure the beating of tempestuous waves.

ULY. Go weep, my actions justify these words.

But to the shore I haste; and to my country

Will steer the vessel o'er Sicilia's waves.

POL. Thou shalt not; with this fragment of the rock

Hurled at thy head, thee and thy perjured crew

Will I demolish: for I yet, though blind,

Can mount the cliff which overhangs the port,

And in its wonted crannies fix my steps.

CHOR. But we, blest partners in Ulysses' voyage,

Henceforth the laws of Bacchus will obey.

# HELEN.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

HELEN.

TEUCER.

CHORUS OF GRECIAN DAMES

(HELEN'S ATTENDANTS).

MENELAUS.

FEMALE SERVANT.

MESSENGER.

THEOCLYMENUS.

THEONOE.

CASTOR AND POLLUX.

SCENE.—PROTEUS' TOMB, AT THE ENTRANCE OF THEOCLYMENUS' PALACE IN PHAROS, AN ISLAND AT THE MOUTH OF THE NILE.

## HELEN.

BRIGHT are these virgin currents of the Nile  
Which water Egypt's soil, and are supplied,  
Instead of drops from heaven, by molten snow.  
But Proteus, while he lived, of these domains  
Was lord, he in the isle of Pharos dwelt,  
King of all Ægypt; for his wife he gained  
One of the nymphs who haunt the briny deep,  
Fair Psamathe, after she left the bed  
Of Æacus; she in the palace bore  
To him two children, one of them a son  
Called Theoclymenus, because his life  
Is passed in duteous homage to the gods;  
A daughter also of majestic mien,  
Her mother's darling, in her infant years  
(Eidothea called by her enraptured sire):  
But when the blooming maid became mature  
For nuptial joys, Theonoe was the name  
They gave her; all the counsels of the gods,  
The present and the future, well she knew,  
Such privilege she from her grandsire Nereus  
Inherited. But not to fame unknown  
Are Sparta's realm, whence I derive my birth,  
And my sire, Tyndarus. There prevails a rumour  
That to my mother Leda Jove was borne  
On rapid wings, the figure of a swan

Assuming, and by treachery gained admission  
To her embraces, flying from an eagle,  
If we may credit such report. My name  
Is Helen ; but I also will recount  
What woes I have endured ; three goddesses,  
For beauty's prize contending, in the cave  
Of Ida, came to Paris ; Juno, Venus,  
And Pallas, virgin progeny of Jove,  
Requesting him to end their strife, and judge  
Whose charms outshone her rivals. But proposing  
For a reward, my beauty (if the name  
Of beauty suit this inauspicious form)  
And promising in marriage to bestow me  
On Paris, Venus conquered : for the swain  
Of Ida, leaving all his herds behind,  
Expecting to receive me for his bride,  
To Sparta came. But Juno, whose defeat  
Fired with resentment her indignant soul,  
Our nuptials frustrated ; for to the arms  
Of royal Priam's son, she gave not me,  
But in my semblance formed a living image  
Composed of ether. Paris falsely deemed  
That he possessed me ; from that time these ills  
Have been increased by the decrees of Jove,  
For he with war hath visited the realms  
Of Greece, and Phrygia's miserable sons,  
That he might lighten from th' unrighteous swarms  
Of its inhabitants the groaning earth,  
And on the bravest of the Grecian chiefs  
Confer renown. While in the Phrygian war,  
As the reward of their victorious arms,  
I to the host of Greece have been displayed,  
Though absent, save in likeness and in name.  
But Mercury, receiving me in folds  
Of air, and covering with a cloud (for Jove  
Was not unmindful of me), in this house  
Of royal Proteus, who of all mankind  
Was in his judgment the most virtuous, placed me,  
That undefiled I might preserve the bed  
Of Menelaus. I indeed am here ;  
But with collected troops my hapless lord  
Pursues the ravisher to Ilion's towers.  
Beside Scamander's stream hath many a chief  
Died in my cause ; but I, who have endured  
All these afflictions, am a public curse ; —  
For 'tis supposed, that treacherous to my lord,  
I have through Greece blown up the flames of war.  
Why then do I prolong my life ? these words  
I heard from Mercury : " That I again



In Sparta, with my husband shall reside,  
 When he discovers that I never went  
 To Troy :<sup>22</sup> he therefore counselled me to keep  
 A spotless chastity. While Proteus viewed  
 The solar beams, I from the nuptial yoke  
 Still lived exempt ; but since the darksome grave  
 Hath covered his remains, the royal son  
 Of the deceased solicits me to wed him :  
 But honouring my first husband, at this tomb  
 Of Proteus, I a suppliant kneel, to him,  
 To him I sue, to guard my nuptial couch,  
 That if through Greece I bear a name assailed  
 By foul aspersions, no unseemly deed  
 May cover me with real infamy.

TEUCER, HELEN.

TEU. Who rules this fortress ? such a splendid dome  
 With royal porticos and blazoned roofs  
 Seems worthy of a Plutus for its lord.  
 But, O ye gods, what vision ! I behold  
 That hateful woman who hath ruined me,  
 And all the Greeks. Heaven's vengeance on thy head !  
 Such a resemblance bear'st thou to that Helen,  
 That if I were not in a foreign land,  
 I with this stone would smite thee ; thou shouldst bleed  
 For being like Jove's daughter.

HEL. Wretched man,  
 Whoe'er you are, why do you hate me thus  
 Because of her misfortunes ?

TEU. I have erred  
 In giving way to such unseemly rage.  
 All Greece abhors Jove's daughter. But forgive me,  
 O woman, for the words which I have uttered.

HEL. Say who you are, and from what land you come ?

TEU. One of that miserable race the Greeks.

HEL. No wonder is it then, if you detest  
 The Spartan Helen. But to me declare,  
 Who are you, whence, and from what father sprung ?

TEU. My name is Teucer, Telamon my sire ;  
 The land which nurtured me is Salamis.

HEL. But wherefore do you wander o'er these meads  
 Laved by the Nile ?

TEU. I from my native land  
 Am banished.

HEL. You, alas ! must needs be wretched.  
 Who drove you thence ?

TEU. My father Telamon.  
 What friend canst thou hold dearer ?

HEL. For what cause

Were you to exile doomed? your situation  
Is most calamitous.

TEU. My brother Ajax,  
Who died at Troy, was author of my ruin.

HEL. How? by your sword deprived of life?

TEU. He fell,  
On his own blade, and perished.

HEL. Was he mad?  
Who could act thus whose intellects are sound?

TEU. Know'st thou Achilles, Peleus' son?

HEL. He erst,  
I heard, to Helen as a suitor came.

TEU. He, at his death, his comrades left to strive  
Which should obtain his arms.

HEL. But why was this  
Hurtful to Ajax?

TEU. When another won  
Those arms, he gave up life.

HEL. Do your afflictions  
Rise from his fate?

TEU. Because I died not with him.

HEL. O stranger, went you then to Troy's famed city?

TEU. And having shared in laying waste its bulwarks,  
I also perished.

HEL. Have the flames consumed,  
And utterly destroyed them?

TEU. Not a trace  
Of those proud walls is now to be discerned.

HEL. Through thee, O Helen, do the Phrygians perish.

TEU. The Greeks too: for most grievous are the mischiefs  
Which have been wrought.

HEL. What length of time's elapsed  
Since Troy was sacked?

TEU. Seven times the fruitful year  
Hath almost turned around her lingering wheel.

HEL. But how much longer did your host remain  
Before those bulwarks?

TEU. Many a tedious moon;  
There full ten years were spent.

HEL. And have ye taken  
That Spartan dame?

TEU. By her dishevelled hair,  
Th' adul'tress, Menelaus dragged away.

HEL. Did you behold that object of distress,  
Or speak you from report?

TEU. These eyes as clearly  
Witnessed the whole, as I now view thy face.

HEL. Be cautious, lest for her ye should mistake  
Some well-formed semblance which the gods have sent.

TEU. Talk if thou wilt on any other subject ;  
No more of her.

HEL. Believe you this opinion  
To be well-grounded ?

TEU. With these eyes I saw her,  
And she e'en now is present to my soul.

HEL. Have Menelaus and his consort reached  
Their home.

TEU. They are not in the Argive land,  
Nor on Eurotas' banks.

HEL. Alas ! alas !  
The tale you have recounted, is to her  
Who hears you, an event most inauspicious.

TEU. He and his consort, both they say are dead.

HEL. Did not the Greeks in one large squadron sail ?

TEU. Yes ; but a storm dispersed their shattered fleet.

HEL. Where were they, in what seas ?

TEU. They at that time  
Through the mid waves of the Ægean deep  
Were passing.

HEL. Can none tell if Menelaus  
Escaped this tempest ?

TEU. No man ; but through Greece  
'Tis rumoured he is dead.

HEL. I am undone.  
Is Thestius' daughter living ?

TEU. Mean'st thou Leda ?  
She with the dead is numbered.

HEL. Did the shame  
Of Helen cause her wretched mother's death ?

TEU. Around her neck, 'tis said the noble dame  
Entwined the gliding noose.

HEL. But live the sons  
Of Tyndarus, or are they too now no more ?

TEU. They are, and are not, dead ; for two accounts  
Are propagated.

HEL. Which is best confirmed ?  
O wretched me !

TEU. Some say that they are gods  
Under the semblance of two radiant stars.

HEL. Well have you spoken. But what else is rumoured ?

TEU. That on account of their lost sister's guilt  
They died by their own swords. But of these themes  
Enough : I wish not to renew my sorrows.

But O assist me in the great affairs  
On which I to these royal mansions came,  
Wishing to see the prophetess Theonoe,  
And learn, from Heaven's oracular response,  
How I may steer my vessel with success

To Cyprus' isle, where Phœbus hath foretold  
That I shall dwell, and on the walls I rear  
Bestow the name of Salamis, yet mindful  
Of that dear country I have left behind.

HEL. This will your voyage of itself explain :  
But fly from these inhospitable shores,  
Ere Proteus' son, the ruler of this land,  
Behold you : fly, for he is absent now  
Pursuing with his hounds the savage prey.  
He slays each Grecian stranger who becomes  
His captive : ask not why, for I am silent ;  
And what could it avail you to be told ?

TEU. O woman, most discreetly hast thou spoken ;  
Thy kindness may the righteous gods repay !  
For though thy person so resemble Helen,  
Thou hast a soul unlike that worthless dame.  
Perdition seize her ; never may she reach  
The current of Eurotas : but mayst thou,  
Most generous woman, be for ever blest. [*Exit TEUCER.*]

HEL. Plunged as I am 'midst great and piteous woes,  
How shall I frame the plaintive strain, what Muse  
With tears, or doleful elegies, invoke ?

#### ODE.

##### I. 1.

Ye syrens, winged daughters of the earth,  
Come and attune the sympathetic string,  
Expressive now no more of mirth,  
To soothe my griefs, the flute of Libya bring ;  
Record the tortures which this bosom rend,  
And echo back my elegiac strains :  
Proserpine next will I invoke, to send  
Numbers adapted to her votary's pains ;  
So shall her dark abode, while many a tear I shed,  
Waft the full dirge to soothe th' illustrious dead.

#### CHORUS, HELEN.

##### CHORUS.

##### I. 2.

Near the cerulean margin of our streams  
I stood, and on the tufted herbage spread  
My purple vestments in those beams  
Which from his noontide orb Hyperion shed,  
When on a sudden from the waving reeds  
I heard a plaintive and unwelcome sound  
Of bitter lamentation ; o'er the meads  
Groans inarticulate were poured around :  
Beneath the rocky cave, dear scene of past delight,  
Some Naiad thus bewails Pan's hasty flight.

## HELEN.

## II. 1.

Ye Grecian nymphs, whom those barbarians caught,  
 And from your native land reluctant bore,  
     The tidings which yon sailor brought  
 Call forth these tears; for Ilion is no more,  
 By him of Ida, that predicted flame  
 Destroyed; through me, alas! have myriads bled,  
 If not through me, through my detested name.  
 By th' ignominious noose is Leda dead  
 Who my imaginary guilt deplored;  
 And doomed by the relentless Fates in vain  
 To tedious wanderings, my unhappy lord  
 At length hath perished 'midst the billowy main:  
 The twin protectors of their native land,  
 Castor and Pollux, from all human eyes  
 Are vanished, they have left Eurotas' strand,  
 And fields, in playful strife where each young wrestler vies.

## CHORUS.

## II. 2.

My royal mistress, your disastrous fate  
 With many a groan and fruitless tear I mourn.  
     I from that hour your sorrows date  
 When amorous Jove on snowy pinions borne,  
 In form a swan, by Leda was carest.  
 Is there an evil you have not endured?  
 Your mother is no more, through you unblest  
 Are Jove's twin sons. Nor have your vows procured  
 Of your dear country the enchanting sight  
 A rumour too through various realms hath spread,  
 Caught by the envious vulgar with delight,  
 Assigning you to the barbarian's bed.  
 Amid the waves, far from the wished-for shore,  
 Your husband hath been buried in the main.  
 You shall behold your native walls no more  
 Nor under burnished roofs your wonted state maintain.

## HELEN.

## III.

What Phrygian artist on the top of Ide,  
     Or vagrant of a Grecian line,  
     Felled that inauspicious pine,  
 To frame the bark which Paris o'er the tide  
     Dared with barbaric oars to guide,

When to my palace, in an evil hour  
 Caught by beauty's magic power,  
 He came to seize me for his bride?  
 But crafty Venus, authoress of these broils,  
 Marched thither, leagued with death, t' annoy  
 Triumphant Greece and vanquished Troy,  
 (Wretch that I am, consumed with endless toils!)  
 And Juno seated on her golden throne,  
 Consort of thundering Jove,  
 Sent Hermes from the realms above,  
 Who found me, when I carelessly had strewn  
 Leaves plucked from roses in my vest,  
 As Minerva's votary drest;  
 He bore me through the paths of air  
 To this loathed, this dreary land,  
 Called Greece, and Priam's friends the strife to share,  
 And roused to bloody deeds each rival band;  
 Where Simois' current glides, my name  
 Hence is marked with groundless shame.  
 CHOR. Your woes I know are grievous: but to bear  
 With tranquil mind the necessary ills  
 Of life, is most expedient.

HEL. To what ills  
 Have I been subject, O my dear companions!  
 Did not my mother, as a prodigy  
 Which wondering mortals gaze at, bring me forth?  
 For neither Grecian nor barbaric dame  
 Till then produced an egg, in which her children  
 Enveloped lay, as they report, from Jove  
 Leda engendered. My whole life and all  
 That hath befallen me, but conspires to form  
 One series of miraculous events;  
 To Juno some, and to my beauty some,  
 Are owing. Would to Heaven, that, like a tablet  
 Whose picture is effaced, I could exchange—  
 This form for one less comely, since the Greeks  
 Forgetting those abundant gifts showered down  
 By prosperous Fortune which I now possess,  
 Think but of what redounds not to my honour,  
 And still remember my ideal shame.  
 Whoever therefore, with one single species  
 Of misery is afflicted by the gods,  
 Although the weight of Heaven's chastising hand  
 Be grievous, may with fortitude endure  
 Such visitation: but by many woes  
 Am I oppressed, and first of all exposed  
 To slanderous tongues, although I ne'er have erred.—  
 It were a lesser evil e'en to sin  
 Then be suspected falsely. Then the gods,

'Midst men of barbarous manners, placed me far  
 From my loved country : torn from every friend,  
 I languish here, to servitude consigned  
 Although of free born race : for 'midst barbarians  
 Are all enslaved but one, their haughty lord.  
 My fortunes had this single anchor left,  
 Perchance my husband might at length arrive  
 To snatch me from my woes ; but he, alas !  
 Is now no more, my mother too is dead,  
 And I am deemed her murd'ress, though unjustly,  
 Yet am I branded with this foul reproach ;  
 And she who was the glory of our house,  
 My daughter in the virgin state grown grey,  
 Still droops unwedded : my illustrious brothers,  
 Castor and Pollux, called the sons of Jove,  
 Are now no more. But I impute my death,  
 Crushed as I am by all these various woes,  
 Not to my own misdeeds, but to the power  
 Of adverse fortune only : this one danger  
 There yet remains, if at my native land  
 I should again arrive, they will confine me  
 In a close dungeon, thinking me that Helen  
 Who dwelt in Ilion, till she thence was borne  
 By Menelaus. Were my husband living,  
 We might have known each other, by producing  
 Those tokens to which none beside are privy :  
 But this will never be, nor can he e'er  
 Return in safety. To what purpose then  
 Do I still lengthen out this wretched being ?  
 To what new fortunes am I still reserved ?  
 Shall I select a husband, but to vary  
 My present ills, to dwell beneath the roof  
 Of a barbarian, at luxurious boards  
 With wealth abounding, seated ? for the dame  
 Whom wedlock couples with the man she hates  
 Death is the best expedient. But with glory  
 How shall I die ? the fatal noose appears  
 To be so base, that e'en in slaves 'tis held  
 Unseemly thus to perish ; in the poniard  
 There's somewhat great and generous. But to me  
 Delays are useless : welcome instant death :  
 Into such depth of misery am I plunged.  
 For beauty renders other women blest, ~  
 But hath to me the source of ruin proved.

CHOR. O Helen, whosoe'er the stranger be  
 Who hither came, believe not that the whole  
 Of what he said, is truth.

HEL. But in plain terms  
 Hath he announced my dearest husband's death.

CHOR. The false assertions which prevail, are many.

HEL. Clear is the language in which honest Truth  
Loves to express herself.

CHOR. You are inclined  
Rather to credit inauspicious tidings  
Than those which are more favourable.

HEL. By fears  
Encompassed, am I hurried to despair.

CHOR. What hospitable treatment have you found  
Beneath these roofs?

HEL. All here, except the man  
Who seeks to wed me, are my friends.

CHOR. You know  
How then to act : leave this sepulchral gloom,

HEL. What are the counsels, or the cheering words  
You wish to introduce?

CHOR. Go in, and question  
The daughter of the Nereid, her who knows  
All hidden truths, Theonoe, if your lord  
Yet live, or view the solar beams no more :  
And when you have learnt this, as suit your fortunes  
Indulge your joys, or pour forth all your tears :  
But ere you know aught fully, what avail  
Your sorrows? therefore listen to my words ;  
Leaving this tomb, attend the maid : from her  
Shall you know all. But why should you look farther  
When truth is in these mansions to be found?  
With you the doors I'll enter ; we together  
The royal virgin's oracles will hear.  
For 'tis a woman's duty to exert  
Her utmost efforts in a woman's cause.

HEL. My friends, your wholesome counsels I approve :  
But enter ye these doors, that ye, within  
The palace, my calamities may hear

CHOR. You summon her who your commands obeys  
Without reluctance.

HEL. Woeful day ! ah me,  
What lamentable tidings shall I hear?

CHOR. Forbear these plaintive strains, my dearest queen,  
Nor with presaging soul anticipate  
Evils to come.

HEL. What hath my wretched lord  
Endured? Doth he yet view the light, the sun  
Borne in his radiant chariot, and the paths  
Of all the starry train? Or hath he shared  
The common lot of mortals, is he plunged  
Among the dead, beneath th' insatiate grave?

CHOR. O construe what time yet may bring to pass  
In the most favourable terms.



HEL. On thee  
I call to testify, and thee adjure,  
Eurotas, on whose verdant margin grow  
The waving reeds : O tell me, if my lord  
Be dead, as fame avers.

CHOR. Why do you utter  
These incoherent ditties?

HEL. Round my neck  
The deadly noose will I entwine, or drive  
With my own hand a poniard through my breast ;  
For I was erst the cause of bloody strife ;  
But now am I a victim, to appease  
The wrath of those three goddesses who strove  
On Ida's mount, when 'midst the stalls where fed  
His lowing herds, the son of Priam waked  
The sylvan reed, to celebrate my beauty.

CHOR. Cause these averted ills, ye gods, to light  
On other heads ; but, O my royal mistress,  
May you be happy.

HEL.                    Thou, O wretched Troy,  
 To crimes which thou hast ne'er committed, ow'st  
 Thy ruin, and those horrible disasters  
 Thou hast endured. For as my nuptial gifts,  
 Hath Venus caused an intermingled stream  
 Of blood and tears to flow, she, griefs to griefs  
 And tears to tears hath added ; all these sufferings  
 Have been the miserable Ilion's lot.  
 Of their brave sons the mothers were bereft  
 The virgin sisters of the mighty dead  
 Strewed their shorn tresses on Scamander's banks,  
 While, by repeated shrieks, victorious Greece  
 Her woes expressing, smote her laurelled head,  
 And with her nails deep furrowing tore her cheeks.  
 Happy Calisto, thou Arcadian nymph  
 Who didst ascend the couch of Jove, transformed  
 To a four-footed savage, far more blest  
 Art thou than she to whom I owe my birth :  
 For thou beneath the semblance of a beast,  
 Thy tender limbs with shaggy hide o'erspread,  
 And glaring with stern visage, by that change  
 Didst end thy griefs. She too whom Dian drove  
 Indignant from her choir, that hind whose horns  
 Were tipped with gold, the bright Titanian maid,  
 Daughter of Merops, to her beauty owed  
 That transformation : but my charms have ruined  
 Both Troy and the unhappy Grecian host.

[*Exeunt HILAN and CHORUS.*]

## MENELAUS.

O Pelops, in the strife on Pisa's field,  
Who didst outstrip the fiery steeds that whirled  
The chariot of Oenomaus, would to Heaven  
That when thy severed limbs before the gods  
Were at the banquet placed, thou then thy life  
Amidst the blest immortal powers hadst closed,  
Ere thou my father Atreus didst beget,  
Whose issue by his consort Ærope  
Were Agamemnon and myself, two chiefs  
Of high renown. No ostentatious words  
Are these ; but such a numerous host, I deem,  
As that which we to Ilion's shore conveyed,  
Ne'er stemmed the tide before ; these troops their king  
Led not by force to combat, but bore rule  
O'er Grecian youths his voluntary subjects,  
And among these, some heroes, now no more,  
May we enumerate ; others from the sea  
Who 'scaped with joy, and to their homes returned,  
E'en after fame had classed them with the dead.  
But I, most wretched, o'er the briny waves  
Of ocean wander, since I have o'erthrown  
The battlements of Troy, and though I wish  
Again to reach my country ; by the gods  
Am I esteemed unworthy of such bliss.  
E'en to the Libyan deserts have I sailed,  
And traversed each inhospitable scene  
Of brutal outrage ; still as I approach  
My country, the tempestuous winds repel me,  
Nor hath a prosperous breeze from Heaven yet filled  
My sails, to waft me to the Spartan coast :  
And now a shipwrecked, miserable man,  
Reft of my friends, I on these shores am cast,  
My vessel hath been shivered 'gainst the rocks  
Into a thousand fragments : on the keel,  
The only part which yet remains entire  
Of all that fabric, scarce could I and Helen,  
Whom I from Troy have borne, escape with life  
Through fortunes unforeseen : but of this land  
And its inhabitants, the name I know not :  
For with the crowd I blushed to intermingle  
Lest they my squalid garments should observe,  
Through shame my wants concealing. For the man  
Of an exalted station, when assailed  
By adverse fortune, having never learned  
How to endure calamity, is plunged  
Into a state far worse than he whose woes  
Have been of ancient date. But pinching need

Torments me : for I have not either food  
 Or raiment to protect my shivering frame.  
 Which may be guessed from these vile rags I wear  
 Cast up from my wrecked vessel : for the sea  
 Hath swallowed up my robes, my tissued vests,  
 And every ensign of my former state.  
 Within the dark recesses of a cave  
 Having concealed my wife, that guilty cause  
 Of all my woes, and my surviving friends  
 Enjoined to guard her, hither am I come.  
 Alone, in quest of necessary aid  
 For my brave comrades whom I there have left,  
 If by my search I haply can obtain it,  
 I roam : but when I viewed this house adorned  
 With gilded pinnacles, and gates that speak  
 The riches of their owner, I advanced :  
 For I have hopes that from this wealthy mansion  
 I, somewhat for my sailors, shall obtain.  
 But they who want the necessary comforts  
 Of life, although they are disposed to aid us,  
 Yet have not wherewithal. Ho ! who comes forth  
 From yonder gate, my doleful tale to bear  
 Into the house ?

FEMALE SERVANT. MENELAUS.

FEMALE SER. Who at the threshold stands ?  
 Wilt thou not hence depart, lest thy appearance  
 Before these doors give umbrage to our lords ?  
 Else shalt thou surely die, because thou can'st  
 From Greece, whose sons shall never hence return.

MEN. Well hast thou spoken, O thou aged dame.  
 Wilt thou permit me ? For to thy behests  
 Must I submit : but suffer me to speak.

FEMALE SER. Depart : for 'tis my duty to permit  
 No Greek to enter this imperial dome.

MEN. Lift not thy hand against me, nor attempt  
 To drive me hence by force.

FEMALE SER. Thou wilt not yield  
 To my advice, thou therefore art to blame.

MEN. Carry my message to thy lords within.

FEMALE SER. I fear lest somewhat dreadful might ensue.  
 Should I repeat your words.

MEN. I hither come  
 A shipwrecked man, a stranger, one of those  
 Whom all hold sacred.

FEMALE SER. To some other house,  
 Instead of this, repair.

MEN. I am determined  
 To enter : but comply with my request.

FEMALE SER. Be well assured thou art unwelcome here,  
And shalt ere long by force be driven away.

MEN. Alas ! alas ! where are my valiant troops ?

FEMALE SER. Elsewhere, perhaps, thou wert a mighty man ;  
But here art thou no longer such.

MEN. O Fortune,  
How am I galled with undeserved reproach !

FEMALE SER. Why are those eyelids moist with tears, why  
griev'st thou ?

MEN. Because I once was happy.

FEMALE SER. Then depart,  
And mingle social tears with those thou lov'st.

MEN. But what domain is this, to whom belong  
These royal mansions ?

FEMALE SER. Proteus here resides ;  
This land is Egypt.

MEN. Egypt ? wretched me !  
Ah, whither have I sailed !

FEMALE SER. But for what cause  
Scorn'st thou the race of Nile ?

MEN. I scorn them not :  
My own disastrous fortunes I bewail.

FEMALE SER. Many are wretched, thou in this respect  
Art nothing singular.

MEN. Is he, the king  
Thou speak'st of, here within ?

FEMALE SER. To him belongs  
This tomb ; his son is ruler of this land.

MEN. But where is he : abroad, or in the palace ?

FEMALE SER. He's not within : but to the Greeks he bears  
The greatest enmity.

MEN. Whence rose this hate,  
Productive of such bitter fruits to me ?

FEMALE SER. Beneath these roofs Jove's daughter Helen  
dwells.

MEN. What mean'st thou ? Ha ! what words with wonder  
fraught  
Are these which thou hast uttered ? O repeat them.

FEMALE SER. The child of Tyndarus, she who in the realm  
Of Sparta erst abode.

MEN. Whence came she hither ?  
How can this be ?

FEMALE SER. From Lacedæmon's realm.

MEN. When ? Hath my wife been torn from yonder cave ?

FEMALE SER. Before the Greeks, O stranger, went to Troy  
Retreat then from these mansions, for within  
Hath happened a calamitous event,  
By which the palace is disturbed. Thou com'st  
Unseasonably, and if the king surprise thee,

Instead of hospitable treatment, death  
Must be thy portion. To befriend the Greeks  
Though well inclined, yet thee have I received  
With these harsh words, because I fear the monarch.

[Exit FEMALE SERVANT.]

MEN. What shall I say? For I, alas! am told  
Of present sorrows added to the past.  
Come I not hither, after having borne  
From vanquished Troy my consort, whom I left  
Within yon cave well guarded? Yet here dwells  
Another Helen, whom that woman called  
Jove's daughter. Lives there on the banks of Nile  
A man who bears the sacred name of Jove?  
For in the heavens there's only one. What country,  
But that where glides Eurotas' stream beset  
With waving reeds, is Sparta? Tyndarus' name  
Suits him alone. But is there any land  
Synonymous with Lacedæmon's realm,  
And that of Troy? I know not how to solve  
This doubt; for there are many, it appears,  
In various regions of the world, who bear  
Like appellations; city corresponds  
With city; woman borrows that of woman:  
Nor must we therefore wonder. Yet again  
Here will I stay, though danger be announced  
By yonder aged servant at the door:  
For there is no man so devoid of pity  
As not to give me food, when he the name  
Of Menelaus hears. That dreadful fire  
By which the Phrygian bulwarks were consumed  
Is memorable, and I who kindled it  
Am known in every land. I'll therefore wait  
Until the master of this house return.  
But I have two expedients, and will practise  
That which my safety shall require; of soul  
Obdurate, if he prove, in my wrecked bark  
Can I conceal myself, but if the semblance  
Which he puts on, be mild, I for relief  
From these my present miseries, will apply.  
But this of all the woes that I endure  
Is the most grievous, that from other kings  
I, though a king myself, should be reduced  
To beg my food: but thus hath Fate ordained.  
Nor is it my assertion, but a maxim  
Among the wise established, that there's nought  
More powerful than the dread behests of Fate.

HELEN, CHORUS, MENELAUS.

CHOR. I heard what yon prophetic maid foretold,  
 Who in the palace did unfold  
 The oracles ; that to the shades profound  
 Of Erebus, beneath the ground  
 Interred, not yet hath Menelaus ta'en  
 His passage : on the stormy main  
 Still tossed, he cannot yet approach the strand,  
 The haven of the Spartan land :  
 The chief, who now his vagrant life bewails,  
 Without a friend, unfurls his sails,  
 From Ilion's realm to every distant shore  
 Borne o'er the deep with luckless oar.

HEL. I to this hallowed tomb again repair,  
 Now I have heard the grateful tidings uttered  
 By sage Theonoe, who distinctly knows  
 All that hath happened ? for she says my lord  
 Is living, and yet views the solar beams :  
 But after passing o'er unnumbered straits  
 Of ocean, to a vagrant's wretched life  
 Full long inured, on these Ægyptian coasts,  
 When he his toils hath finished, shall arrive.  
 Yet there is one thing more, which she hath left  
 Unmentioned, whether he shall come with safety.  
 This question I neglected to propose,  
 O'erjoyed when she informed me he yet lives ;  
 She also adds, that he is near the land,  
 From his wrecked ship, with his few friends, cast forth,  
 O mayst thou come at length ; for ever dear  
 To me wilt thou arrive. Ha ! who is that ?  
 Am not I caught, through some deceitful scheme  
 Of Proteus' impious son, in hidden snares ?  
 Like a swift courser, or the madding priestess  
 Of Bacchus, shall I not with hasty step  
 Enter the tomb, because his looks are fierce  
 Who rushes on, and strives to overtake me ?

MEN. On thee I call, who to the yawning trench  
 Around that tomb, and blazing altars hiest  
 Precipitate. Stay : wherefore dost thou fly ?  
 With what amazement doth thy presence strike  
 And almost leave me speechless !

HEL. O my friends,  
 I suffer violence ; for from the tomb  
 I by this man am dragged, who to the king  
 Will give me, from whose nuptial couch I fled.

MEN. We are no pirates, nor the ministers  
 Of lustful villany.

HEL. Yet is the vest  
You wear unseemly.

MEN. Stay thy rapid flight,  
Dismiss thy fears.

HEL. I stop, now I have reached  
This hallowed spot.

MEN. Say, woman, who thou art;  
What face do I behold?

HEL. But who are you?  
For I by the same reasons am induced

To ask this question.

MEN. Never did I see  
A greater likeness.

HEL. O ye righteous gods!  
For 'tis a privilege the gods alone

Confer, to recognize our long-lost friends.

MEN. Art thou a Grecian or a foreign dame?

HEL. Of Greece: but earnestly I wish to know  
Whence you derive your origin.

MEN. In thee  
A wonderful resemblance I discern  
Of Helen.

HEL. Menelaus' very features  
These eyes in you behold, still at a loss  
Am I for words t' express my thoughts.

MEN. Full clearly  
Hast thou discovered a most wretched man.

HEL. O to thy consort's arms at length restored!

MEN. To what a consort? O forbear to touch  
My garment!

HEL. E'en the same, whom to your arms,  
A noble bride, my father Tyndarus gave.

MEN. Send forth, O Hecate, thou orb of light,  
Some more benignant spectre.

HEL. You in me  
Behold not one of those who minister

At Hecate's abhorred nocturnal rites.

MEN. Nor am I sure the husband of two wives.

HEL. Say, to whom else in wedlock are you joined?

MEN. To her who lies concealed in yonder cave,

The prize I hither bring from vanquished Troy.

HEL. You have no wife but me.

MEN. If I retain

My reason yet, these eyes are sure deceived.

HEL. Seem you not then, while me you thus behold,  
To view your real consort?

MEN. Though your person

Resemble hers, no positive decision

Can I presume to form.



HEL. Observe me well,  
And mark wherein we differ. Who can judge  
With greater certainty than you?

MEN. Thou bear'st  
Her semblance, I confess.

HEL. Who can inform you  
Better than your own eyes?

MEN. What makes me doubt  
Is this; because I have another wife.

HEL. To the domains of Troy I never went:  
It was my image only.

MEN. Who can fashion  
Such bodies, with the power of sight endued?

HEL. Composed of ether, you a consort have,  
Heaven's workmanship.

MEN. Wrought by what plastic god?  
For the events thou speak'st of are most wondrous.

HEL. Lest Paris should obtain me, this exchange  
Was made by Juno.

MEN. How couldst thou be here,  
At the same time, and in the Phrygian realm?

HEL. The name, but not the body, can be present  
At once in many places.

MEN. O release me;  
For I came hither in an evil hour.

HEL. Will you then leave me here, and bear away  
That shadow of a wife?

MEN. Yet, O farewell,  
Because thou art like Helen.

HEL. I'm undone:  
For though my husband I again have found,  
Yet shall not I possess him.

MEN. My conviction,  
From all those grievous toils I have endured  
At Ilion, I derive, and not from thee.

HEL. Ah, who is there more miserable than I am?  
My dearest friends desert me: I, to Greece,  
To my dear native land, shall ne'er return.

MESSENGER, MENELAUS, HELEN, CHORUS.

MES. After a tedious search, O Menelaus,  
At length have I with difficulty found you,  
But not till over all the wide extent  
Of this barbaric region I had wandered;  
Sent by the comrades whom you left behind.

MEN. Have ye been plundered then by the barbarians?

MES. A most miraculous event hath happened,  
Yet less astonishing by far in name  
Than in reality.



MEN. Speak, for thou bring'st  
Important tidings by this breathless haste.

MES. My words are these : in vain have you endured  
Unnumbered toils.

MEN. Those thou bewail'st are ill  
Of ancient date. But what hast thou to tell me ?

MES. Borne to the skies your consort from our sight  
Hath vanished, in the heavens is she concealed,  
Leaving the cave in which we guarded her,  
When she these words had uttered : " O ye sons  
Of hapless Parygia, and of Greece : for me  
Beside Scamander's conscious stream ye died,  
Through Juno's arts, because ye falsely deemed  
Helen by Phrygian Paris was possest :  
But after having here remained on earth  
My stated time, observing the decrees  
Of Fate, I to my sire the liquid ether  
Return : but Tyndarus' miserable daughter,  
Though guiltless, hath unjustly been accused."  
Daughter of Leda hail ! wert thou then here ?  
While I as if thou to the starry paths  
Hadst mounted, through my ignorance proclaimed  
Thou from this world on rapid wings wert borne.  
But I no longer will allow thee thus  
To sport with the afflictions of thy friends ;  
For in thy cause thy lord and his brave troops  
On Ilion's coast already have endured  
Abundant toils.

MEN. These are the very words  
She uttered ; and by what ye both aver  
The truth is ascertained. O happy day  
Which gives thee to my arms !

HEL. My dearest lord,  
O Menelaus, it is long indeed  
Since I have seen you : but joy comes at last.  
My friends, transported I receive my lord  
Whom I once more with these fond arms enfold,  
After the radiant chariot of the sun  
Hath oft the world illumined.

MEN. I embrace  
Thee too : but having now so much to say  
I know not with what subject to begin.

HEL. Joy raises my exulting crest, these tears  
Are tears of ecstasy, around your neck  
My arms I fling with transport, O my husband,  
O sight most wished for !

MEN. I acquit the Fates.  
Since Jove's and Leda's daughter I possess,  
On whom her brothers borne on milk-white steeds

Erst showered abundant blessings, when the torch  
 Was kindled at our jocund nuptial rite ;  
 Though from my palace her the gods conveyed.  
 But evil now converted into good  
 To me thy husband hath at length restored  
 My long-lost consort : grant, O bounteous Heaven,  
 That I these gifts of fortune may enjoy.

HEL. May you enjoy them, for my vows concur  
 With yours ; nor, of us two, can one be wretched  
 Without the other. O my friends, I groan  
 No longer, I no longer shed the tear  
 For my past woes : my husband I possess  
 Whom I from Troy expected to return  
 Full many, many years.

MEN. I still am thine,  
 And thee with these fond arms again enfold.  
 But oft the chariot of the sun revolved  
 Through his diurnal orbit, ere the frauds  
 Of Juno I discerned. Yet more from joy  
 Than from affliction rise the tears I shed.

HEL. What shall I say ? what mortal could presume  
 E'er to have hoped for such a blest event ?  
 An unexpected visitant once more  
 I clasp you to my bosom.

MEN. And I thee  
 Who didst appear to sail for Ida's town,  
 And Ilion's wretched turrets. By the gods,  
 Inform me, I conjure thee, by what means  
 Thou from my palace hither wert conveyed.

HEL. Alas ! you to the source of all my woes  
 Ascend, and search into most bitter tidings.

MEN. Speak : for whate'er hath been ordained by Heaven  
 Ought to be published.

HEL. I abhor the topic  
 On which I now am entering.

MEN. Yet relate  
 All that thou know'st ; for pleasing 'tis to hear  
 Of labours that are past.

HEL. I never went  
 To that barbarian youth's adulterous couch  
 By the swift oar impelled : but winged love  
 Those hapless spousals formed.

MEN. What god, what fate  
 Hath torn thee from thy country ?

HEL. O my lord,  
 The son of Jove hath placed me on the banks  
 Of Nile.

MEN. With what amazement do I hear  
 This wondrous tale of thy celestial guide !

HEL. Oft have I wept, and still the tear bedews  
These eyes : to Juno, wife of Jove, I owe  
My ruin.

MEN. Wherefore wished she to have heaped  
Mischiefs on thee ?

HEL. Ye sources of whate'er  
To me hath been most dreadful, O ye baths  
And fountains, where those goddesses adorned  
Their rival beauties, from whose influence rose  
That judgment !

MEN. Were those curses on thy head  
By Juno showered, that judgment to requite ?

HEL. To rescue me from Venus.

MEN. What thou mean'st  
Inform me.

HEL. Who to Paris had engaged——

MEN. O wretched woman !

HEL. Wretched, wretched me !  
Thus did she waft me to th' Egyptian coast.

MEN. Then in thy stead to him that image gave,  
As thou inform'st me.

HEL. But alas ! what woes  
Thence visited our wretched house ! ah mother !  
Ah me !

MEN. What sayst thou ?

HEL. Leda is no more.  
Around her neck she fixed the deadly noose  
On my account, through my unhappy nuptials  
O'erwhelmed with foul disgrace.

MEN. Alas ! But lives  
Hermione our daughter ?

HEL. Yet unwedded,  
Yet childless, O my husband, she bewails  
My miserable 'spousals, my disgrace.

MEN. O Paris, who hast utterly o'erthrown  
All my devoted house, these curst events,  
Both thee, and myriads of the Grecian troops  
With brazen arms refulgent, have destroyed.

HEL. But from my country in an evil hour,  
From my loved native city, and from you,  
Me hath the goddess driven, a wretch accursed  
In that I left our home, and bridal bed,  
Which yet I left not, for those base espousals.

CHOR. If ye hereafter meet with happier fortune,  
This may atone for all ye have endured  
Already.

MEN. To me too, O Menelaus,  
Communicate a portion of that joy  
Which I perceive, but know not whence it springs.

MEN. Thou too, old man, shalt in our conference share.

MES. Was not she then the cause of all the woes  
Endured at Troy?

MEN. Not she: we were deceived  
By those immortal Powers, whose plastic hand  
Moulded a cloud into that baleful image.

MES. What words are these you utter? have we toiled  
In vain, and only for an empty cloud?

MEN. These deeds were wrought by Juno, and the strife  
'Twixt the three goddesses.

MES. But is this woman  
Indeed your wife?

MEN. E'en she: and thou for this  
On my assertion safely mayst depend.

MES. My daughter, O how variable is Jove,  
And how inscrutable! for he with ease  
Whirls us around, now here, now there; one suffers  
Full many toils; another, who ne'er knew  
What sorrow was, is swallowed up at once  
In swift perdition, nor in Fortune's gifts  
A firm and lasting tenure doth enjoy.  
Thou and thy husband have endured a war,  
Of slander thou, but he of pointed spears:  
For by the tedious labours he endured  
He nothing could obtain, but now obtains  
The greatest and the happiest of all boons,  
Which comes to him unsought. Thou hast not shamed  
Thy aged father, and the sons of Jove,  
Nor acted as malignant rumour speaks.  
I now renew thy hymeneal rite,  
And still am mindful of the torch I bore,  
Running before the steeds, when in a car  
Thou with this favoured bridegroom wert conveyed  
From thy paternal mansion's happy gates.  
For worthless is that servant who neglects  
His master's interests, nor partakes their joys,  
Nor feels for their afflictions. I was born  
Indeed a slave, yet I with generous slaves  
Would still be numbered, for although the name  
I bear is abject, yet my soul is free.  
Far better this, than if I had at once  
Suffered two evils, a corrupted heart,  
And vile subjection to another's will.

MEN. Courage, old man: for thou hast borne my  
shield,

And in my cause endured unnumbered toils,  
Sharing my dangers: now partake my joys;  
Go tell the friends I left, what thou hast seen,  
And our auspicious fortunes: on the shore

Bid them remain, till our expected conflict  
Is finished ; and observe how we may sail  
From this loathed coast ; that, with our better fortune  
Conspiring, we, if possible, may 'scape  
From these barbarians.

MES. Your commands, O king,  
Shall be obeyed. But I perceive how vain  
And how replete with falsehood is the voice  
Of prophets : no dependence can be placed  
Upon the flames that from the altar rise,  
Or on the voices of the feathered choir.  
It is the height of folly to suppose  
That birds are able to instruct mankind.  
For Calchas, to the host, nor by his words  
Nor signs, declared, " I for a cloud behold  
My friends in battle slain." The seer was mute,  
And Troy in vain was taken. But perhaps  
You will rejoice, "'Twas not the will of Heaven  
That he should speak." Why then do we consult  
These prophets ? We by sacrifice should ask  
For blessings from the gods, and lay aside  
All auguries. This vain delusive bait  
Was but invented to beguile mankind.  
No sluggard e'er grew rich by divination,  
The best of seers are Prudence and Discernment.

[*Exit MESSENGER.*]

CHOR. My sentiments on prophets well accord  
With those of this old man. He whom the gods  
Th' immortal gods befriend, in his own house  
Hath a response that never can mislead.

HEL. So be it. All thus far is well. But how  
You came with safety, O unhappy man,  
From Troy, 'twill nought avail for me to know ;  
Yet with the sorrows of their friends, have friends  
A wish to be acquainted.

MEN. Thou hast asked  
A multitude of questions in one short  
And blended sentence. Why should I recount  
To thee our sufferings on the Ægean deep,  
Those treacherous beacons, by the vengeful hand  
Of Nauplius kindled on Eubœa's rocks,  
The towns of Crete, or in the Libyan realm,  
Which I have visited, and the famed heights  
Of Perseus ? never could my words assuage  
Thy curiosity, and, by repeating  
My woes to thee, I should but grieve the more,  
And yet a second time those sufferings feel.

HEL. You in your answer have been more discreet  
Than I who such a question did propose.

But pass o'er all beside, and only tell me  
How long you wandered o'er the briny main.

MEN. Year after year, besides the ten at Troy,  
Seven tedious revolutions of the sun.

HEL. The time you speak of, O unhappy man,  
Is long indeed : but from those dangers saved  
You hither come to bleed.

MEN. What words are these?  
What dost thou mean? O, how hast thou undone me !

HEL. Fly from these regions with your utmost speed ;  
Or he to whom this house belongs will slay you.

MEN. What have I done that merits such a fate?

HEL. You hither come an unexpected guest,  
And are a hindrance to my bridal rite.

MEN. Is there a man then who presumes to wed  
My consort?

HEL. And with arrogance to treat me,  
Which I, alas ! have hitherto endured.

MEN. Of private rank, in his own strength alone  
Doth he confide, or rules he o'er the land?

HEL. Lord of this region, royal Proteus' son.

MEN. This is the very riddle which I heard  
From yonder female servant.

HEL. At which gate  
Of this barbarian palace did you stand?

MEN. Here, whence I like a beggar was repelled.

HEL. What, did you beg for food ! ah wretched me !

MEN. The fact was thus : though I that abject name  
Assumed not.

HEL. You then know, it seems, the whole  
About my nuptials.

MEN. This I know : but whether  
Thou has escaped th' embraces of the king  
I still am uninformed.

HEL. That I have kept  
Your bed still spotless, may you rest assured.

MEN. How canst thou prove the fact? if thou speak  
truth  
To me, it will give pleasure.

HEL. Do you see,  
Close to the tomb, my miserable seat?

MEN. I on the ground behold a couch : but what  
Hast thou to do with that, O wretched woman?

HEL. Here I a suppliant bowed, that I might 'scape  
From those espousals.

MEN. Couldst thou find no altar,  
Or dost thou follow the barbarian mode?

HEL. Equally with the temples of the gods  
Will this protect me.

MEN. Is not then my bark  
Allowed to waft thee to the Spartan shore?  
HEL. Rather the sword than Helen's bridal bed  
Awaits you.

MEN. Thus should I of all mankind  
Be the most wretched.

HEL. Let not shame prevent  
Your 'scaping from this land.

MEN. And leaving thee,  
For whom I laid the walls of Ilion waste?

HEL. 'Twere better than to perish in the cause  
Of me your consort.

MEN. Such unmanly deeds  
As these thou speak'st of would disgrace the chief  
Who conquered Troy.

HEL. You cannot slay the king,  
Which is perhaps the project you have formed.

MEN. Hath he then such a body as no steel  
Can penetrate?

HEL. My reasons you shall know.  
But it becomes not a wise man t' attempt  
What cannot be performed.

MEN. Shall I submit  
My hands in silence to the galling chain?

HEL. You know not how to act in these dire straits  
To which we are reduced : but of some plot  
Must we avail ourselves.

MEN. 'Twere best to die  
In some brave action than without a conflict.

HEL. One only hope of safety yet remains.

MEN. By gold can it be purchased, or depends it  
On dauntless courage, or persuasive words?

HEL. Of your arrival if the monarch hear not.

MEN. Who can inform him? he will never sure  
Know who I am.

HEL. He hath a sure associate,  
Within his palace, equal to the gods.

MEN. Some voice which from its inmost chambers  
sounds?

HEL. No : 'tis his sister, her they call Theonoe

MEN. She bears indeed a most prophetic name;  
But say, what mighty deeds can she perform?

HEL. All things she knows, and will inform her brother  
That you are here.

MEN. We both, alas ! must die,  
Nor can I possibly conceal myself.

HEL. Could our united supplications move her?

MEN. To do what action? Into what vain hope  
Wouldst thou mislead me?



HEL. Not to tell her brother  
That you are in the land.

MEN. If we prevail  
Thus far, can we escape from these domains ?

HEL. With ease, if she concur in our design,  
But not without her knowledge.

MEN. This depends  
On thee : for woman best prevails with woman.

HEL. Around her knees these suppliant hands I'll twine.

MEN. Go then ; but what if she reject our prayer ?

HEL. You certainly must die ; and I by force  
Shall to the king be wedded.

MEN. Thou betray'st me ;  
That force thou talk'st of is but mere pretence.

HEL. But by your head that sacred oath I swear.

MEN. What sayst thou, wilt thou die, and never change  
Thy husband ?

HEL. By the self-same sword : my corse  
Shall lie beside you.

MEN. To confirm the words  
Which thou hast spoken, take my hand.

HEL. I take  
Your hand, and swear that after you are dead  
I will not live.

MEN. And I will put an end  
To my existence, if deprived of thee.

HEL. But how shall we die so as to procure  
Immortal glory ?

MEN. Soon as on the tomb  
Thee I have slain, myself will I destroy.  
But first a mighty conflict shall decide  
Our claims who to thy bridal bed aspire.  
Let him who dares, draw near : for the renown  
I won at Troy, I never will belie,  
Nor yet returning to the Grecian shore  
Suffer unnumbered taunts for having reft  
Thetis of her Achilles, and beheld  
Ajax the Telamonian hero slain,  
With Neleus' grandson, though I dare not bleed  
To save my consort. Yet on thy behalf  
Without regret, will I surrender up  
This fleeting life : for if the gods are wise  
They lightly scatter dust upon the tomb  
Of the brave man who by his foes is slain,  
But pile whole mountains on the coward's breast.

CHOR. O may the race of Tantalus, ye gods,  
At length be prosperous, may their sorrows cease !

HEL. Wretch that I am ! for such is my hard fate :  
O Menelaus, we are lost for ever.



The prophetess Theonoe, from the palace  
Comes forth : I hear the sounding gates unbarred.  
Fly from this spot. But whither can you fly ?  
For your arrival here, full well she knows,  
Absent, or present. How, O wretched me,  
Am I undone ! in safety you return  
From Troy, from a barbarian land, to rush  
Again upon the swords of fresh barbarians.

THEONOE, MENELAUS, HELEN, CHORUS.

THEON. [*to one of her Attendants.*]  
Lead thou the way, sustaining in thy hand  
The kindled torch, and fan the ambient air,  
Observing every due and solemn rite,  
That we may breathe the purest gales of Heaven.  
Meanwhile do thou, if any impious foot  
Have marked the path, with lustral flames efface  
The taint, and wave the pitchy brand around,  
That I may pass ; and when we have performed  
Our dutious homage to th' immortal powers,  
Into the palace let the flame be borne,  
Restore it to the Lares. What opinion  
Have you, O Helen, of th' events foretold  
By my prophetic voice ? Your husband comes,  
Your Menelaus in this land appears,  
Reft of his ships, and of your image reft.  
'Scaped from what dangers, O unhappy man,  
Art thou arrived, although thou know'st not yet  
Whether thou e'er shalt to thy home return,  
Or here remain. For there is strife in Heaven ;  
And Jove on thy account this day will hold  
A council ; Juno who was erst thy foe,  
Now grown benignant, with thy consort safe  
To Sparta would convey thee, that all Greece  
May understand that the fictitious nuptials  
Of Paris, were the baleful gift of Venus.  
But Venus wants to frustrate thy return,  
Lest she should be convicted, or appear  
At least the paim of beauty to have purchased  
By vending Helen for a wife to Paris.  
But this important question to decide,  
On me depends ; I either can destroy thee.  
Which is the wish of Venus, by informing  
My brother thou art here ; or save thy life  
By taking Juno's side, and thy arrival  
Concealing from my brother, who enjoined me  
To inform him whensoever thou on these shores  
Shouldst land. Who bears the tidings to my brother,

That Menelaus' self is here, to save me  
From his resentment?

HEL. At thy knees I fall,  
O virgin, as a suppliant, and here take  
My miserable seat, both for myself,  
And him whom, scarce restored to me, I see  
Now on the verge of death. Forbear t' inform  
Thy brother, that to these fond arms my lord  
Again is come. O save him, I implore thee;  
Nor gratify thy brother, by betraying  
The feelings of humanity, to purchase  
A wicked and unjust applause: for Jove  
Detests all violence, he bids us use  
What we possess, but not increase our stores  
By rapine. It is better to be poor,  
Than gain unrighteous wealth. For all mankind  
Enjoy these common blessings, Air and Earth;  
Nor ought we our own house with gold to fill,  
By keeping fraudfully another's right,  
Or seizing it by violence. For Hermes,  
Commissioned by the blest immortal powers,  
Hath, at my cost, consigned me to thy sire,  
To keep me for this husband, who is here  
And claims me back again: but by what means  
Can he receive me after he is dead?  
Or how can the Ægyptian king restore me  
A living consort to my breathless lord?  
Consider therefore, both the will of Heaven  
And that of thy great father. Would the god,  
Would the deceased, surrender up or keep  
Another's right? I deem they would restore it.  
Hence to thy foolish brother shouldst not thou  
Pay more respect than to thy virtuous sire.  
And sure if thou, a prophetess, who utter'st  
Th' oracular responses of the gods,  
Break'st through thy father's justice, to comply  
With an unrighteous brother: it were base  
In thee to understand each mystic truth  
Revealed by the immortal powers, the things  
That are, and those that are not; yet o'erlook  
The rules of justice. But O stoop to save  
Me, miserable me, from all those ills  
In which I am involved; this great exertion  
Of thy benignant aid, my fortunes claim.  
For there is no man who abhors not Helen;  
'Tis rumoured through all Greece that I betrayed  
My husband, and abode beneath the roofs  
Of wealthy Phrygia. But to Greece once more  
Should I return and to the Spartan realm;

When they are told, and see, how to the arts  
 Of these contending goddesses they owe  
 Their ruin ; but that I have to my friends  
 Been ever true, they to the rank I held  
 'Midst chaste and virtuous matrons, will restore me :  
 My daughter too, whom no man dares to wed,  
 From me her bridal portion shall receive ;  
 And I, no longer doomed to lead the life  
 Of an unhappy vagrant, shall enjoy  
 The treasures that our palaces contain.  
 Had Menelaus died, and been consumed  
 In the funereal pyre, I should have wept  
 For him far distant in a foreign realm ;  
 But now shall I for ever be bereft  
 Of him who lives, and seem to have escaped  
 From every danger. Virgin, act not thus ;  
 To thee I kneel a suppliant ; O confer  
 On me this boon, and emulate the justice  
 Of your great sire. For fair renown attends  
 The children, from a virtuous father sprung,  
 Who equal their hereditary worth.

THEON. Most piteous are the words which you have  
 spoken ;  
 You also claim my pity : but I wish  
 To hear what Menelaus yet can plead  
 To save his life.

MEN. I cannot at your knees  
 Fall prostrate, or with tears these eyelids stain :  
 For I should cover all the great exploits  
 Which I achieved at Ilion with disgrace,  
 If I became a dastard ; though some hold  
 'Tis not unworthy of the brave to weep  
 When wretched. But this honourable part  
 (If such a part can e'er be honourable)  
 I will not act, because the prosperous fortunes  
 Which erst were mine, are present to my soul.  
 If then you haply are disposed to save  
 A foreigner who justly claims his wife,  
 Restore her, and protect us : if you spurn  
 Our suit, I am not now for the first time,  
 But have been often wretched, and your name  
 Shall be recorded as an impious woman.  
 These thoughts, which I hold worthy of myself,  
 And just, and such as greatly must affect  
 Your inmost heart, I at your father's tomb  
 With energy will utter. Good old-man,  
 Beneath this marble sepulchre who dwell'st,  
 To thee I sue, restore my wife, whom Jove  
 Sent hither to thy realm, that thou for me

Might'st guard her. Thou, I know, since thou art dead,  
 Canst ne'er have power to give her back again :  
 But she, this holy priestess, will not suffer  
 Reproach to fall on her illustrious sire,  
 Whom I invoke amid the shades beneath :  
 For this depends on her. Thee too I call,  
 O Pluto, to my aid, who hast received  
 Full many a corse, which fell in Helen's cause  
 Beneath my sword, and still retain'st the prize :  
 Either restore them now to life, or force  
 Her who seems mightier than her pious father,  
 To give me back my wife. But of my consort  
 If ye resolve to rob me, I will urge  
 Those arguments which Helen hath omitted.  
 Know then, O virgin, first I by an oath  
 Have bound myself, your brother to encounter,  
 And he, or I, must perish ; the plain truth  
 Is this. But foot to foot in equal combat,  
 If he refuse to meet me, and attempt  
 To drive us suppliants from the tomb by famine,  
 My consort will I slay, and with the sword  
 Here on this sepulchre my bosom pierce,  
 That the warm current of our blood may stream  
 Into the grave. Thus shall our corpses lie  
 Close to each other on this polished marble :  
 To you eternal sorrow shall they cause,  
 And foul reproach to your great father's name.  
 For neither shall your brother wed my Helen,  
 Nor any man beside : for I with me  
 Will bear her ; if I cannot bear her home,  
 Yet will I bear her to the shades beneath.  
 But why complain ? If I shed tears, and act  
 The woman's part, I rather shall become  
 An object of compassion, than deserve  
 To be esteemed a warrior. If you list,  
 Slay me, for I can never fall inglorious.  
 But rather yield due credence to my words,  
 So will you act with justice, and my wife  
 Shall I recover.

CHOR. To decide the cause  
 On which we speak, belongs to thee, O virgin :  
 But so decide as to please all.

THEON. By nature  
 And inclination am I formed to act  
 With piety, myself too I revere :  
 Nor will I e'er pollute my sire's renown,  
 Or gratify my brother by such means  
 As might make me seem base. For from my birth,  
 Hath justice in this bosom fixed her shrine :

And since from Nereus I inherited  
 This temper, Menelaus will I strive  
 To save. But now since Juno is disposed  
 To be your friend, with her will I accord :  
 May Venus be propitious, though her rites  
 I never have partaken, and will strive  
 For ever to remain a spotless maid.  
 But I concur with thee, O Menelaus,  
 In all thou to my father at his tomb  
 Hast said : for with injustice should I act  
 If I restored not Helen : had he lived,  
 My sire on thee again would have bestowed  
 Thy consort, and her former lord on Helen.  
 For vengeance, in the shades of Hell beneath,  
 And among all that breathe the vital air,  
 Attends on those who break their plighted trust.  
 The soul of the deceased, although it live  
 Indeed no longer, yet doth still retain  
 A consciousness which lasts for ever, lodged  
 In the eternal scene of its abode,  
 The liquid ether. To express myself  
 Concisely, all that you requested me  
 Will I conceal, nor with my counsels aid  
 My brother's folly ; I to him shall show  
 A real friendship, though without the semblance,  
 If I his vicious manners can reform  
 And make him more religious. Therefore find  
 Means to escape yourselves ; for I will hence  
 Depart in silence. First implore the gods :  
 To Venus sue, that she your safe return  
 Would suffer ; and to Juno, not to change  
 The scheme which she hath formed, both to preserve  
 Your lord and you. O my departed sire,  
 For thee will I exert my utmost might,  
 That on thy honoured name no foul reproach  
 May ever rest. [Exit THEONOE.]

CHOR. No impious man e'er prospered :  
 But fairest hopes attend an honest cause.

HEL. O Menelaus, as to what depends  
 Upon the royal maid, are we secure :  
 But next doth it become you to propose  
 Some means our safety to effect.

MEN. Now listen  
 To me ; thou in this palace long hast dwelt,  
 An inmate with the servants of the king.

HEL. Why speak you thus ? for you raise hopes as  
 though  
 You could do somewhat for our common good.

MEN. Canst thou prevail on any one of those

Who guide the harnessed steeds, to furnish us  
With a swift car?

HEL. Perhaps I might succeed  
In that attempt. But how shall we escape  
Who to these fields and this barbarian land  
Are strangers? An impracticable thing  
Is this you speak of.

MEN. Well, but in the palace  
Concealed, if with this sword the king I slay.

HEL. His sister will not suffer this in silence  
If you attempt aught 'gainst her brother's life.

MEN. We have no ship in which we can escape;  
For that which we brought hither, by the waves  
Is swallowed up.

HEL. Now hear what I propose;  
From woman's lips if wisdom ever flow.  
Will you permit a rumour of your death  
To be dispersed?

MEN. This were an evil omen:  
But I, if any benefit arise  
From such report, consent to be called dead  
While I yet live.

HEL. That impious tyrant's pity  
Our female choir shall move, with tresses shorn,  
And chaunt funereal strains.

MEN. What tendency  
Can such a project have to our deliverance?

HEL. I will allege that 'tis an ancient custom;  
And of the monarch his permission crave,  
That I on you, as if you in the sea  
Had perished, may bestow a vacant tomb.

MEN. If he consent, how can this feigned interment  
Enable us to fly without a ship?

HEL. I will command a bark to be prepared,  
From whence into the bosom of the deep  
Funereal trappings I may cast.

MEN. How well  
And wisely hast thou spoken! but the tomb  
If he direct thee on the strand to raise,  
Nought can this scheme avail.

HEL. But I will say  
'Tis not the usage, in a Grecian realm,  
With earth to cover the remains of those  
Who perished in the waves.

MEN. Thou hast again  
Removed this obstacle: I then with thee  
Will sail, and the funereal trappings place  
In the same vessel.

HEL. 'Tis of great importance

That you, and all those mariners who 'scaped  
The shipwreck, should be present.

MEN. If we find  
A bark at anchor, with our falchions armed  
In one collected band will we assail  
And board it.

HEL. To direct all this, belongs  
To you; but may the prosperous breezes fill  
Our sails, and guide us o'er the billowy deep.

MEN. These vows shall be accomplished; for the gods  
At length will cause my toils to cease: but whence  
Wilt thou pretend thou heard'st that I was dead?

HEL. Yourself shall be the messenger; relate  
How you alone escaped his piteous doom,  
A partner of the voyage with the son  
Of Atreus, and the witness of his death.

MEN. This tattered vest will testify my shipwreck.

HEL. How seasonable was that which seemed at first  
To be a grievous loss! but the misfortune  
May end perhaps in bliss.

MEN. Must I with thee  
Enter the palace, or before this tomb  
Sit motionless?

HEL. Here stay: for if the king  
By force should strive to tear you hence, this tomb  
And your drawn sword will save you. But I'll go  
To my apartment, shear my flowing hair,  
For sable weeds this snowy vest exchange,  
And rend with bloody nails the e livid cheeks:  
For 'tis a mighty conflict, and I see  
These two alternatives: if in my plots  
Detected, I must die; or to my country  
I shall return, and save your life. O Juno,  
Thou sacred queen, who shar'st the couch of Jove,  
Relieve two wretches from their toils; to thee  
Our suppliant arms uplifting high towards Heaven  
With glittering stars adorned, thy blest abode,  
We sue: and thou, O Venus, who didst gain  
The palm of beauty through my promised 'spousals,  
Spare me, thou daughter of Dione, spare;  
For thou enough hast injured me already;  
Exposing not my person, but my name,  
To those barbarians; suffer me to die,  
If thou wilt slay me, in my native land.  
Why art thou still insatiably malignant?  
Why dost thou harass me by love, by fraud,  
By the invention of these new deceits,  
And by thy magic philtres plunge in blood  
Our miserable house? If thou hadst ruled

With mildness, thou to man hadst been most grateful  
 Of all the gods. I speak not this at random.  
 [HELEN and MENELAUS retire behind the tomb.]

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

On thee who build'st thy tuneful seat  
 Protected by the leafy groves, I call,  
 O nightingale, thy accents ever sweet  
 Their murmuring melancholy fall  
 Prolong ! O come, and with thy plaintive strain  
 Aid me to utter my distress,  
 Thy woes, O Helen, let the song express,  
 And those of Troy now levelled with the plain  
 By Grecian might. From hospitable shores,  
 Relying on barbaric oars,  
 The spoiler Paris fled,  
 And o'er the deep to Priam's realm with pride  
 Bore his imaginary bride,  
 Fancying that thou hadst graced his bed,  
 To nuptials fraught with shame by wanton Venus led.

## I. 2.

Unnumbered Greeks, transpierced with spears,  
 Or crushed beneath the falling ramparts, bled :  
 Hence with her tresses shorn, immersed in tears  
 The matron wails her lonely bed,  
 But Nauplius, kindling near th' Eubœan deep  
 Those torches, o'er our host prevailed ;  
 Though with a single bark the traitor sailed,  
 He wrecked whole fleets against Caphareus' steep,  
 And the Ægean coasts, the beacon seemed  
 A star, and through Heaven's conclave gleamed,  
 Placed on the craggy height.  
 While flushed with conquest, from the Phrygian strand  
 They hastened to their native land,  
 Portentous source of bloody fight,  
 The cloud by Juno formed, beguiled their dazzled sight.

## II. 1.

Whether the image was divine.  
 Drew from terrestrial particles its birth,  
 Or from the middle region, how define  
 By curious search, ye sons of earth ?



Far from unravelling Heaven's abstruse intents,  
 We view the world tost to and fro,  
 Mark strange vicissitudes of joy and woe,  
 Discordant and miraculous events.  
 Thou, Helen, art indeed the child of Jove.  
 The swan, thy sire, inflamed by love,  
 To Leda's bosom flew :  
 Yet with imputed crimes malignant fame  
 Through Greece arraigns thy slandered name.  
 Of men I know not whom to trust,  
 But what the gods pronounce have I found ever just.

## II. 2.

Frantic are ye who seek renown  
 Amid the horrors of th' embattled field,  
 Who masking guilt beneath a laurel crown  
 • With nervous arm the falchion wield,  
 Not slaughtered thousands can your fury sate.  
 If still success the judgment guide,  
 If bloody battle right and wrong decide,  
 Incessant strife must vex each rival state :  
 Hence from her home departs each Parygian wife,  
 O Helen, when the cruel strife  
 Which from thy charms arose,  
 One conference might have closed : now myriads dwell  
 With Pluto in the shades of Hell,  
 And flames, as when Jove's vengeance throws  
 The bolt, have caught her towers and finished Ilion's woes.

THEOCLYMENUS, CHORUS (HELEN and MENELAUS  
*behind the tomb*).

THEOC. Hail, O thou tomb of my illustrious sire !  
 For thee have I interred before my gate,  
 That with thy shade I might hold frequent conference,  
 O Proteus ; Theoclymenus thy son  
 Thee, O my father, oft as he goes forth,  
 Oft as he enters these abodes, accosts.  
 But to the palace now convey those hounds  
 And nets, my servants. I full many a time  
 Have blamed myself, because I never punished  
 With death such miscreants ; now I am informed  
 That publicly some Greek to these domains  
 Is come unnoticed by my guards, a spy,  
 Or one who means to carry Helen off  
 By stealth : but if I seize him, he shall die.  
 Methinks I find all over : for the daughter  
 Of Tyndarus sits no longer at the tomb,  
 But from these shores hath fled, and now is crossing

The billowy deep. Unbar the gates, bring forth  
 My coursers from the stalls, and brazen cars;  
 Lest through my want of vigilance the dame  
 Whom I would make my consort, should escape me,  
 Borne from this land. Yet stay; for I behold  
 Those we pursue still here beneath this roof,  
 Nor are they fled. Ho! why in sable vest  
 Hast thou arrayed thyself, why cast aside  
 Thy robes of white, and from thy graceful head  
 With ruthless steel thy glowing ringlets shorn,  
 And wherefore bathed thy cheek with recent tears?  
 Groan'st thou, by visions of the night apprized  
 Of some calamity, or hast thou heard  
 Within, a rumour that afflicts thy soul?

HEL. My lord (for I already by that name  
 Accost you), I am utterly undone,  
 My former bliss is vanished, and I now  
 Am nothing.

THEOC. Art thou plunged into distress  
 So irretrievable? what cruel fate  
 Hath overtaken thee?

HEL. My Menelaus,  
 (Ah, how shall I express myself?) is dead.

THEOC. Although I must not triumph in th' event  
 Thou speak'st of, yet to me 'tis most auspicious.  
 How know'st thou? Did Theonoe tell thee this?

HEL. She and this mariner, who when he perished  
 Was present, both concur in the same tale.

THEOC. Is there a man arrived, who for the truth  
 Of that account can vouch?

HEL. He is arrived:  
 And would to Heaven that such auspicious fortune  
 As I could wish attended him.

THEOC. Who is he?  
 Where is he? I would know the real fact.

HEL. 'Tis he who stupefied with sorrow sits  
 Upon the tomb.

THEOC. In what unseemly garb  
 Is he arrayed, O Phœbus!

HEL. In that dress,  
 Ah me! methinks my husband I behold.

THEOC. But in what country was the stranger born,  
 And whence did he come hither?

HEL. He's a Greek,  
 One of those Greeks who with my husband sailed.

THEOC. How doth he say that Menelaus died?

HEL. Most wretchedly, engulfed amid the waves.

THEOC. Where? as he passed o'er the barbarian  
 seas?

HEL. Dashed on the rocks of Libya, which affords  
No haven.

THEOC. But whence happened it, that he  
This partner of his voyage did not perish?

HEL. The worthless are more prosperous than the brave.

THEOC. Where left he the wrecked fragments of his ship  
When he came hither?

HEL. There, where would to Heaven  
Perdition had o'ertaken him, and spared  
The life of Menelaus.

THEOC. He, it seems,  
Is then no more : but in what bark arrived  
This messenger?

HEL. Some sailors, as he says,  
By chance passed by, and snatched him from the waves.

THEOC. But where's that hateful pest which in thy stead  
Was sent to Ilion?

HEL. Speak you of a cloud,  
Resembling me? it mounted to the skies.

THEOC. O Priam, for how frivolous a cause  
Thou with thy Troy didst perish!

HEL. In their woes  
I too have been involved.

THEOC. But did he leave  
Thy husband's corse unburied, or strew dust  
O'er his remains?

HEL. He left them uninterred,  
Ah, wretched me!

THEOC. And didst thou for this cause  
Sever the ringlets of thy auburn hair?

HEL. Still is he dear, lodged in this faithful breast

THEOC. Hast thou sufficient reason then to weep  
For this calamity?

HEL. Could you bear lightly  
Your sister's death?

THEOC. No surely. But what means  
Thy still residing at this marble tomb?

HEL. Why do you harass me with taunting words,  
And why disturb the dead?

THEOC. Because, still constant  
To thy first husband, from my love thou fliest.

HEL. But I will fly no longer : haste, begin  
The nuptial rite.

THEOC. 'Twas long ere thou didst come  
To this : but I such conduct must applaud.

HEL. Know you then how to act? let us forget  
All that has passed.

THEOC. Upon what terms? with kindness  
Should kindness be repaid.

HEL. Let us conclude  
The peace, and O be reconciled.

THEOC. All strife  
With thee I to the winds of heaven consign.

HEL. Now, since you are my friend, I by those knees  
Conjure you.

THEOC. With what object in thy view,  
To me an earnest suppliant dost thou bend?

HEL. I my departed husband would inter.

THEOC. What tomb can be bestowed upon the absent  
Wouldst thou inter his shade?

HEL. There is a custom  
Among the Greeks established, that the man  
Who in the ocean perishes——

THEOC. What is it?  
For in such matters Pelops' race are wise.

HEL. To bury in their stead an empty vest.

THEOC. Perform funeral rites, and heap the tomb  
On any ground thou wilt.

HEL. We in this fashion  
Bury not the drowned mariner.

THEOC. How then?  
I am a stranger to the Grecian customs.

HEL. Each pious gift due to our breathless friends  
We cast into the sea.

THEOC. On the deceased  
What presents for thy sake can I bestow?

HEL. I know not: for in offices like these  
Am I unpractised, having erst been happy.

THEOC. An acceptable message have you brought,  
O stranger.

MEN. Most ungrateful to myself  
And the deceased.

THEOC. What funeral rites on those  
Ocean hath swallowed up, do ye bestow?

MEN. Such honours as each individual's wealth  
Enables us to pay him.

THEOC. Name the cost,  
And for her sake receive whate'er you will.

MEN. Blood is our first libation to the dead.

THEOC. What blood? inform me, for with your  
instructions

I will comply.

MEN. Determine that thyself,  
For whatsoever thou giv'st will be sufficient.

THEOC. The customary victims 'mong barbarians  
Are either horse or bull.

MEN. Whate'er thou giv'st,  
Let it be somewhat princely.

THEOC. My rich herds  
With these are amply furnished.

MEN. And the bier  
Without the corse is borne in solemn state.

THEOC. It shall : but what is there beside which custom  
Requires to grace the funeral.

MEN. Brazen arms :  
For war was what he loved.

THEOC. We will bestow  
Such presents as are worthy of the race  
Of mighty Pelops.

MEN. And those budding flowers  
Th' exuberant soil produces.

THEOC. But say, how  
And in what manner ye these offerings plunge  
Into the ocean.

MEN. We must have a bark  
And mariners to ply the oars.

THEOC. How far  
Will they launch forth the vessel from the strand ?

MEN. So far as from the shore thou scarce wilt see  
The keel divide the waves.

THEOC. But why doth Greece  
Observe this usage ?

MEN. Lest the rising billows  
Cast back to land th' ablutions.

THEOC. Ye shall have  
A swift Phœnician vessel.

MEN. This were kind,  
And no small favour shown to Menelaus.

THEOC. Without her presence, cannot you perform  
These rites alone ?

MEN. Such task or to a mother,  
Or wife, or child, belongs.

THEOC. 'Tis then her duty,  
You say, to bury her departed lord ?

MEN. Sure, piety instructs us not to rob  
The dead of their accustomed dues.

THEOC. Enough :  
On me it is incumbent to promote

Such virtue in my consort. I will enter  
The palace, and from thence for the deceased  
Bring forth rich ornaments ; with empty hands  
You from this region will not I send forth,  
That you may execute what she desires.  
But having brought me acceptable tidings,  
Instead of these vile weeds shall you receive  
A decent garb and food, that to your country  
You may return : for clearly I perceive

That you are wretched now. But torture not  
Thy bosom with unprofitable cares,  
O hapless woman, for thy Menelaus  
Is now no more, nor can the dead revive.

MEN. Thee it behoves, O blooming dame, to love  
Thy present husband, and to lay aside  
The fond remembrance of thy breathless lord ;  
For such behaviour suits thy fortunes best.  
But if to Greece with safety I return,  
That infamy which erst pursued thy name  
I'll cause to cease, if thou acquit thyself  
Of these great duties like a virtuous consort.

HEL. I will ; nor shall my husband e'er have cause  
To blame me : you too, who are here, shall witness  
The truth of my assertions. But within  
Go lave your wearied limbs, O wretched man,  
And change your habit ; for without delay  
To you will I become a benefactress.  
Hence too with greater zeal will you perform  
The rites my dearest Menelaus claims,  
If all due honours you from me receive.

[*Exeunt* THEOCLYMENUS, HELEN, and MENELAUS

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

O'er mountains erst with hasty tread  
Did the celestial mother stray,  
Nor stop where branching thickets spread,  
Where rapid torrents crossed her way,  
Or on the margin of the billowy deep ;  
Her daughter whom we dread to name  
She wept, while hailing that majestic dame,  
Cymbals of Bacchus from the craggy steep  
Sent forth their clear and piercing sound,  
Her car the harnessed dragons drew ;  
Following the nymph torn from her virgin crew.  
Amidst her maidens swift of foot were found  
Diana skilled the bow to wield,  
Minerva, who in glittering state  
Brandished the spear and raised her Gorgon shield ;  
But Jove looked down from Heaven t' award another fate.

I. 2.

Soon as the mother's toils were o'er,  
When she had finished her career,  
And sought the ravished maid no more,  
To caves where drifted snows appear,

By Ida's nymphs frequented, did she pass,  
 And threw herself in sorrow lost,  
 On rocks and herbage crusted o'er with frost,  
 Despoiled the wasted champaign of its grass,  
 Rendered the peasant's tillage vain,  
 Consuming a dispeopled land  
 With meagre famine ; Spring at her command  
 Denied the flocks that sickened on the plain  
 The leafy tendrils of the vine ;  
 Whole cities died, no victims bled,  
 No frankincense perfumed Heaven's vacant shrine ;  
 Nor burst the current from the Spring's obstructed head.

## II. 1.

Then ceased the banquet, wont to charm  
 Both gods above and men below :  
 The mother's anger to disarm,  
 And mitigate the stings of woe,  
 Till in these words Jove uttered his behests :  
 " Let each benignant grace attend  
 Sweet music's sympathizing aid to lend,  
 And drive corrosive grief from Ceres' breast  
 Indignant for her ravished child :  
 Now, O ye Muses, with the lyre  
 Join the shrill hymns of your assembled choir,  
 The brazen trumpet fill with accents wild,  
 And beat the rattling drums amain."  
 Then first of the immortal band,  
 Venus with lovely smile approved the strain,  
 And raised the deep-toned flute in her enchanting hand.

## II. 2.

The laws reproved such foul desire,  
 Yet 'gainst religion didst thou wed ;  
 Thy uncle caught love's baleful fire,  
 And rushed to thy incestuous bed.  
 Thee shall the mighty mother's wrath confound,  
 Because, through thee, before her shrine  
 No victims slain appease the powers divine.  
 Great virtue have hinds' hides, and ivy wound  
 Upon a consecrated rod ;  
 And youths, with virgins in a ring,  
 When high from earth with matchless force they spring,  
 Loose streams their hair, they celebrate that god  
 The Bacchanalian votaries own,  
 And waste in dance the sleepless night.  
 But thou, confiding in thy charms alone,  
 Forgett'st the moon that shines with more transcendent  
 light.

HELEN, CHORUS.

HEL. Within the palace, O my friends, we prosper  
 For Proteus' royal daughter, in our schemes  
 Conspiring when her brother questioned her  
 About my lord, no information gave  
 Of his arrival : to my interests true  
 She said, that cold in death he views no longer  
 The radiant sun. But now my lord hath seized  
 A vengeful falchion, in that mail designed  
 To have been plunged beneath the deep arrayed  
 With nervous arm he lifts an orb'd shield,  
 In his right hand protended gleams the spear,  
 As if with me he was prepared to pay  
 To the deceased due homage. Furnished thus  
 With brazen arms, he's ready for the battle,  
 And numberless barbarians will subdue  
 Unaided, soon as we the ship ascend.  
 Exchanging those unseemly weeds which clothe  
 The shipwrecked mariner, in splendid robes  
 Have I arrayed him, from transparent springs  
 The laver filled, and bathed his wearied limbs  
 But I must now be silent, for the man  
 Who fancies I am ready to become  
 His consort, leaves the palace. O my friends,  
 In your attachment too I place my trust,  
 Restrain your tongues, for we, when saved ourselves,  
 If possible will save you from this thralldom.

THEOCLYMENUS, HELEN, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

THEOC. Go forth, in such procession as the stranger  
 Directs you, O my servants, and convey  
 These gifts funereal to the briny deep.  
 But if thou dissapprove not what I say,  
 Do thou, O Helen, yield to my persuasions,  
 And here remain. For whether thou attend,  
 Or art not present at the obsequies  
 Of thy departed husband, thou to him  
 Wilt show an equal reverence. Much I dread  
 Lest hurried on by wild desire thou plunge  
 Into the foaming billows, for the sake  
 Of him on whom thou doat'st, thy former lord,  
 Since thou his doom immoderately bewail'st  
 Though he be lost, and never can return.

HEL. O my illustrious husband, I am bound  
 To pay due honours to the man whom first  
 I wedded, of our ancient nuptial joys  
 A memory still retaining, for so well  
 I loved my lord that I could even die



With him. But what advantage would result  
 To the deceased, should I lay down my life?  
 Yet let me go myself, and to his shade  
 Perform each solemn rite. But may the gods,  
 On you, and on the stranger who assists me  
 In this my pious task, with liberal hand  
 Confer the gifts I wish. But you in me  
 Shall such a consort to your palace bear  
 As you deserve, to recompense your kindness  
 To me and Menelaus. Such events  
 In some degree are measured by the will  
 Of Fortune: but give orders for a ship  
 To be prepared, these trappings to convey,  
 So shall your purpose & bounty be complete.

THEOC. [*to one of his Attendants.*]

Go thou, and furnish them a Tyrian bark  
 Of fifty oars, with skillful sailors manned.

HEL. But may not he who decorates the tomb  
 Govern the ship?

THEOC. My sailors must to him  
 Yield an implicit deference.

HEL. This injunction  
 Repeat, that they may clearly understand it.

THEOC. A second time, will I, and yet a third,  
 Issue this self-same mandate, if to thee  
 This can give pleasure.

HEL. May the gods confer  
 Blessings on you, and prosper my designs!

THEOC. Waste not thy bloom with unavailing tears.

HEL. To you this day my gratitude will prove.

THEOC. All these attentions to the dead are nought  
 But unavailing toil.

HEL. My pious care  
 Not to those only whom the silent grave  
 Contains, but to the living too extends.

THEOC. In me thou may'st expect to find a husband  
 Who yields not to the Spartan Menelaus.

HEL. I censure not your conduct, but bewail  
 My own harsh destiny.

THEOC. Bestow thy love  
 On me, and prosperous fortunes shall return.

HEL. It is a lesson I have practised long,  
 To love my friends.

THEOC. Shall I my navy launch,  
 To join in these funereal rites?

HEL. Dread lord,  
 Pay not unseemly homage to your vassals.

THEOC. Well! I each sacred usage will allow  
 Practised by Pelops' race, for my abodes

Are undefiled with blood : thy Menelaus  
 In Ægypt died not. But let some one haste  
 And bid the nobles bear into my house  
 The bridal gifts : for the whole earth is bound  
 To celebrate in one consenting hymn  
 My blest espousals with the lovely Helen.  
 But go, embark upon the briny main,  
 O stranger, and as soon as ye have paid  
 All decent homage to her former lord  
 Bring back my consort hither : that with me  
 When you have feasted at our nuptial rite  
 You to your native mansion may return,  
 Or here continue in a happy state. [*Exit THEOCLYMENUS*]

MEN. O Jove, thou mighty father, who art called  
 A god supreme in wisdom, from thy heaven  
 Look down, and save us from our woes : delay not  
 To aid us : for we drag the galling yoke  
 Of sorrow and mischance : if with thy finger  
 Thou do but touch us, we shall soon attain  
 The fortune which we wish for, since the toils  
 We have endured already are sufficient.  
 Ye gods, I now invoke you, from my mouth  
 So shall ye hear full many joyful accents  
 Mixed with these bitter plaints : for I deserve not  
 To be for ever wretched ; but to tread  
 At length secure. O grant me this one favour,  
 And make my future life completely blest.

[*Exeunt MENELAUS and HELEN.*]

#### CHORUS.

#### ODE.

#### I. I.

Swift bark of Sidon, by whose dashing oars  
 Divided oft, the frothy billows rise,  
 Propitious be thy voyage from these shores :  
     In thy train the dolphins play,  
     O'er the deep thou lead'st the way,  
 While motionless its placid surface lies.  
     Soon as Serenity the fair,  
     That azure daughter of the main,  
     Shall in this animating strain  
 Have spoken : "To the gentle breeze of air  
     Expand each undulating sail,  
     Row briskly on before the gale,  
 Ye mariners, in Perseus' ancient seat  
     Till Helen rest her wearied feet."

## I. 2.

Those sacred nymphs shall welcome thy return  
 Who guard the portals of Minerva's fane  
 Or speed the current from its murmuring urn :  
     Choral dances of delight  
     That prolong the jocund night,  
 At Hyacinthus' banquet shalt thou join,  
     Fair stripling, whom with luckless hand  
     Unwitting did Apollo slay  
     At games that crowned the festive day,  
 Hurling his quoit on the Laconian strand ;  
     To him Jove's son due honours paid :  
     At Sparta too, that lovely maid  
 Shalt thou behold, whom there thou left'st behind,  
     Still to celibacy consigned.

## II. 1.

O might we cleave the air, like Libyan cranes,  
 Who fly in ranks th' impending wintry storm ;  
 When their shrill leader bids them quit the plains,  
     They the veteran's voice obey,  
     O'er rich harvests wing their way,  
 Or where parched wastes th' unfruitful scene deform.  
     With lengthened neck, ye feathered race  
     Who skim the clouds in social band,  
     Where the seven Pleiades expand  
 Their radiance, and Orion heaves his mace,  
     This joyous embassy convey  
     As near Eurôtas' banks ye stray ;  
 That Menelaus to his subject land  
     Victorious comes from Phrygia's strand.

## II. 2.

Borne in your chariot down th' ethereal height,  
 At length, ye sons of Tyndarus, appear,  
 While vibrates o'er your heads the starry light :  
     Habitants of heaven above,  
     Now exert fraternal love.  
 If ever Helen to your souls was dear,  
     A calm o'er th' azure ocean spread,  
     Bridle the tempests of the main,  
     Propitious gales from Jove obtain,  
 Your sister snatch from the barbarian's bed :  
     Commenced on Ida's hill, that strife,  
     Embittered with reproach her life,  
 Although she never viewed proud Ilion's tower  
     Reared by Apollo's matchless power.

THEOCLYMENUS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MES. O king, I have discovered in the palace,  
Events most inauspicious : what fresh woes  
Is it my doleful office to relate !

THEOC. Say what hath happened ?

MES. Seek another wife,  
For Helen hath departed from this realm.

THEOC. Borne through the air on wings, or with swift foot  
Treading the ground ?

MES. Her o'er the briny main  
From Ægypt's shores, hath Menelaus wasted,  
Who came in person with a feigned account  
Of his own death.

THEOC. O dreadful tale ! what ship  
From these domains conveys her ? thou relat'st  
Tidings the most incredible.

MES. The same  
You to that stranger gave, and in one word  
To tell you all, he carries off your sailors.

THEOC. How is that possible ? I wish to know :  
For such an apprehension never entered  
My soul, as that one man could have subdued  
The numerous band of mariners, with whom  
Thou wert sent forth.

MES. When from the royal mansion  
Jove's daughter to the shore was borne, she trod  
With delicate and artful step, pretending  
To wail her husband's loss, though he was present,  
And yet alive. But when we reached the haven,  
Sidonia's largest vessel we hauled forth,  
Furnished with benches, and with fifty oars ;  
But a fresh series of incessant toil  
Followed this toil ; for while one fixed the mast,  
Another ranged the oars, and with his hand  
The signal gave, the sails were bound together,  
Then was the rudder fastened to the stern  
With thongs, cast forth : while they observed us busied  
In such laborious task, the Grecian comrades  
Of Menelaus to the shore advanced,  
Clad in their shipwrecked vestments. Though their form  
Was graceful, yet their visages were squalid :  
But Atreus' son, beholding their approach,  
Under the semblance of a grief that masked  
His treacherous purpose, in these words addressed them :  
" How, O ye wretched sailors, from what bark  
Of Greece that hath been wrecked upon this coast  
Are ye come hither ? will ye join with us  
In the funereal rites of Menelaus,

Whom Tyndarus's daughter, to an empty tomb  
Consigns, though absent?" Simulated tears  
They shed, and went aboard the ship, conveying  
The presents to be cast into the sea  
For Menelaus. But to us these things  
Appeared suspicious, and we made remarks  
Among ourselves upon the numerous band  
Of our intruding passengers; but checked  
Our tongues from speaking openly, through deference  
To your commands. For when you to that stranger  
Trusted the guidance of the ship, you caused  
This dire confusion. All beside, with ease  
Had we now lodged aboard, but could not force  
The sturdy bull to advance; he bellowing rolled  
His eyes around, bending his back and low'ring  
Betwixt his horns, nor dared we to approach  
And handle him. But Helen's husband cried:  
"O ye who laid Troy waste, will ye forget  
To act like Greeks? why scruple ye to seize  
And on your youthful shoulders heave the beast  
Up to the rising prow, a welcome victim  
To the deceased?" His falchion, as he spoke,  
The warrior drew. His summons they obeyed,  
Seized the stout bull, and carried him aboard:  
But Menelaus stroked the horse's neck  
And face, and with this gentle usage led him  
Into the bark. At length when all its freight  
The vessel had received, with graceful foot  
Helen, the steps ascending, took her seat  
On the mid deck; and Menelaus near her,  
E'en he who they pretended was no more.  
But some on the right side, and on the left  
Others in equal numbers, man to man  
Opposed, their station took, their swords concealing  
Beneath their garments. We distinctly heard  
The clamorous sailors animate each other  
To undertake the voyage. But from land  
When a convenient distance we had steered,  
The pilot asked this question: "Shall we sail,  
O stranger, any farther from the coast,  
Or is this right? for 'tis my task to guide  
The vessel." He replied: "Enough for me."  
Then seized with his right hand the falchion, leaped  
Upon the prow, and standing o'er the bull  
The victim without mentioning the name  
Of any chief deceased; but as he drove  
The weapon through his neck, thus prayed: "O Neptune,  
Who in the ocean dwell'st, and ye chaste daughters  
Of Nereus, to the Nauplian shore convey

Me and my consort, from this hostile land,  
 In safety." But a crimson tide of blood,  
 Auspicious to the stranger, stained the waves ;  
 And some exclaimed : " There's treachery in this voyage,  
 Let us sail homewards, issue thy commands,  
 And turn the rudder." But the son of Atreus,  
 Who had just slain the bull, to his companions  
 Called loudly : " Why delay, O ye the flower  
 Of Greece, to smite, to slaughter those barbarians,  
 And cast them from the ship into the waves ? "  
 But to your sailors our commander spoke  
 A different language : " Will not some of you  
 Tear up a plank, or with a shattered bench,  
 Or ponderous oar, upon the bleeding heads  
 Of those audacious foreigners our foes,  
 Impress the ghastly wound ? " But on their feet  
 All now stood up ; our hands with nautic poles  
 Were armed, and theirs with swords : a tide of slaughter  
 Ran down the ship. But Helen from the poop  
 The Greeks encouraged : " Where is the renown  
 Ye gained at Troy ? display 'gainst these barbarians  
 The same undaunted prowess." In their haste  
 Full many fell, some rose again, the rest  
 Might you have seen stretched motionless in death.  
 But Menelaus, sheathed in glittering mail,  
 Wherever his confederates he descried  
 Hard pressed, rushed thither with his lifted sword,  
 Driving us headlong from the lofty deck  
 Into the waves, and forced your mariners  
 To quit their oars. But the victorious king  
 Now seized the rudder, and to Greece declared  
 He would convey the ship : they hoisted up  
 The stately mast : propitious breezes came ;  
 They left the land : but I from death escaping,  
 Let myself gently down into the waves  
 Borne on the cordage which sustains the anchor ;  
 My strength began to fail, when some kind hand  
 Threw forth a rope, and brought me safe ashore,  
 That I to you these tidings might convey.  
 There's nought more beneficial to mankind  
 Than wise distrust.

CHOR. I never could have thought  
 That Menelaus who was here, O king,  
 Could have imposed so grossly or on you  
 Or upon us.

THEOC. Wretch that I am, ensnared  
 By woman's treacherous arts ! the lovely bride  
 I hoped for, hath escaped me. If the ship  
 Could be o'ertaken by our swift pursuit,

My wrongs would urge me with vindictive hand  
To seize the strangers. But I now will punish  
That sister who betrayed me ; in my house  
Who when she saw the Spartan Menelaus,  
Informed me not : she never shall deceive  
Another man by her prophetic voice.

CHOR. Ho ! whither, O my sovereign, would you go,  
And for what bloody purpose ?

THEOC. Where the voice  
Of rigid justice summons me. Retire,  
And stand aloof.

CHOR. Yet will not I let loose  
Your garment ; for you hasten to commit  
A deed most mischievous.

THEOC. Wouldst thou, a slave,  
Govern thy lord ?

CHOR. Here reason's on my side.

THEOC. That shall not I allow, if thou refuse  
To quit thy hold.

CHOR. I will not then release you.

THEOC. To slay that worst of sisters.

CHOR.

That most pious.

THEOC. Her who betrayed me.

CHOR.

Glorious was the fraud

That caused so just a deed.

THEOC.

When she bestowed

My consort on another.

CHOR.

On the man

Who had a better claim——

THEOC.

But who is lord

Of what belongs to me ?

CHOR.

Who from her sire

Received her.

THEOC.

She by Fortune was bestowed

On me.

CHOR. But ta'en away again by Fate.

THEOC. Thou hast no right to judge of my affairs.

CHOR. If I but speak to give you better counsels.

THEOC. I am thy subject then, and not thy king.

CHOR. For having acted piously, your sister

I vindicate.

THEOC. Thou seem'st to wish for death.

CHOR. Kill me. Your sister you with my consent

Shall never slay ; I rather would yield up

My life on her behalf. It is most glorious

To generous servants for their lords to die.



CASTOR *and* POLLUX, THEOCLYMENUS, CHORUS.

CAS. *and* POL. Restrain that ire that hurries thee away  
 Beyond the bounds of reason, O thou king  
 Of Ægypt's realm; and listen to the voice  
 Of us twin sons of Jove, whom Leda bore  
 Together with that Helen who is fled  
 From thy abodes. Thou rashly hast indulged  
 Thine anger, for the loss of her whom Fate  
 Ne'er destined to thy bed. Nor hath thy sister  
 Theonoe, from th' immortal Nereid sprung,  
 To thee done any injury; she reveres  
 The gods, and her great father's just behests.  
 For till the present hour, was it ordained  
 That Helen in thy palace should reside:  
 But when Troy's walls were from their bases torn,  
 And she had to the rival goddesses  
 Furnished her name, no longer was it fit  
 That she should for thy nuptials be detained,  
 But to her ancient home return, and dwell  
 With her first husband. In thy sister's breast  
 Forbear to plunge the sword, and be convinced  
 That she in this affair hath acted wisely.  
 We long ere this our sister had preserved,  
 Since Jove hath made us gods, but were too weak  
 At once to combat the behests of Fate,  
 And the immortal powers, who had ordained  
 That these events should happen. This to thee,  
 O Theoclymenus, I speak. These words  
 Next to my lovely sister, I address;  
 Sail with your husband, for a prosperous breeze  
 Your voyage shall attend. We your protectors  
 And your twin brothers, on our coursers borne  
 Over the waves, will guide you to your country,  
 But after you have finished life's career,  
 You shall be called a goddess, shall partake  
 With us the rich oblations, and receive  
 The gifts of men: for thus hath Jove decreed.  
 But where the son of Maia placed you first,  
 When he had borne you from the Spartan realm,  
 And formed by stealth from the aerial mansions  
 An image of your person, to prevent  
 Paris from wedding you, there is an isle  
 Near the Athenian realm, which men shall call  
 Helen in future times, because that spot  
 Received you, when in secrecy conveyed  
 From Sparta. The Heavens also have ordained  
 The wanderer Menelaus shall reside  
 Among the happy islands. For the gods



To those of nobler minds no hatred bear ;  
At their command though grievous toil await  
The countless multitude.

THEOC. Ye sons of Jove  
And Leda, I the contest will decline  
Which I at first so violently urged,  
Hoping your lovely sister to obtain,  
And my own sister's life resolve to spare :  
Let Helen to her native shores return,  
If 'tis the will of Heaven : but be assured,  
The same high blood ye spring from with the best  
And chastest sister : hail then, for the sake  
Of Helen with a lofty soul endued,  
Such as in female bosoms seldom dwells.

CHOR. A thousand shapes our varying fates assume  
The gods perform what least we could expect,  
And oft the things for which we fondly hoped  
Come not to pass: but Heaven still finds a clue  
To guide our steps through life's perplexing maze,  
And thus doth this important business end.



# ANDROMACHE.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ANDROMACHE.	MOLOSSUS.
ATTENDANT.	PELEUS.
CHORUS OF PHTHIAN	NURSE OF HERMIONE.
WOMEN.	ORESTES.
HERMIONE.	MESSENGER.
MENELAUS.	THETIS.

SCENE.—THE VESTIBULE OF THETIS' TEMPLE BETWEEN  
PHTHIA AND PHARSALIA IN THESSALY.

### ANDROMACHE.

O THEBES, thou pride of Asia, from whose gate  
I came resplendent with a plenteous dower,  
To Priam's regal house, the fruitful wife  
Of Hector : his Andromache was erst  
An envied name : but now am I more wretched  
Than any woman, or already born,  
Or to be born hereafter ; for I saw  
My husband Hector by Achilles slain,  
And that unhappy son whom to my lord  
I bore, Astyanax, from Troy's high towers  
Thrown headlong ; when our foes had sacked the city,  
Myself descended from a noble line  
Of freeborn warriors, reached the Grecian coast,  
On Neoptolemus that island prince  
For the reward of his victorious arms  
Bestowed : selected from the Phrygian spoils.  
'Twixt Phthia and Pharsalia, in these fields,  
I dwell, where Thetis from the haunts of men  
Retreating, with her Peleus erst abode.  
By Thessaly's inhabitants, this spot  
Is from th' auspicious nuptials of that goddess  
Called Thetidæum : here Achilles' son  
Residing, suffers Peleus still to rule  
Pharsalia's land, nor will assume the sceptre  
While lives his aged grandsire. In these walls

A son, who to th' embraces of my lord  
 Achilles' offspring, owes his birth, I bore,  
 And though I had been wretched, a fond hope  
 Still cherished, that while yet the boy was safe  
 I some protection and relief might find  
 In my calamities ; but since my lord  
 (Spurning my servile couch) that Spartan dame  
 Hermione espoused, with ruthless hate  
 By her am I pursued ; for she pretends  
 That I, by drugs endued with magic power,  
 Administered in secret, make her barren  
 And odious to her lord, because I wish  
 To occupy this mansion in her stead,  
 And forcibly to drive her from his couch,  
 To which, at first I with reluctance came,  
 But now have left it : mighty Jove can witness  
 That I became the partner of his bed  
 Against my own consent. But she remains  
 Deaf to conviction, and attempts to slay me :  
 In this design her father Menelaus  
 Assists his daughter, he is now within,  
 And on such errand left the Spartan realm ;  
 Fearing his rage, I near the palace take  
 My seat, in Thetis' temple, that the goddess  
 From death may save me ; for both Peleus' self,  
 And the descendants of that monarch, hold  
 This structure reared in memory of his wedlock  
 With the fair Nereid, in religious awe.  
 But hence, in secret, trembling for his life,  
 My only child have I conveyed away,  
 Because his noble father is not present  
 To aid me, and avails not now to guard  
 His son, while absent in the Delphic land,  
 To expiate there the rage with which he sought  
 The Pythian tripod, and from Phœbus claimed  
 A reparation for his father's death.  
 If haply he can deprecate the curses  
 Attendant on his past misdeeds, and make  
 The god propitious to his future days.

FEMALE ATTENDANT, ANDROMACHE.

ATT. My queen, for still I scruple not to use  
 The same respectful title which I gave you  
 When we in Ilion dwelt ; you and your lord  
 While he was living, shared my duteous love,  
 And now I with important tidings fraught  
 To you am come, trembling indeed lest one  
 Of our new rulers overhear the tale,

Yet greatly pitying your disastrous fate :  
 For Menelaus and his daughter form  
 Dire plots against you ; of these foes beware.

AND. O my dear fellow-servant (for thou shar'st  
 Her bondage who was erst thy queen, but now  
 Is wretched), ah ! what mean they ? what fresh schemes  
 Have they devised to take away my life,  
 Who am by woes encompassed ?

ATT. They intend,  
 O miserable dame, to kill your son,  
 Whom privately you from this house conveyed.  
 AND. Are they informed I sent the child away ?  
 Ah me ! who told them ? in what utter ruin  
 Am I involved !

ATT. I know not ; but thus much  
 Of their designs I heard ; in quest of him  
 Is Menelaus from these doors gone forth.

AND. Then am I lost indeed : for, O my child,  
 These two relentless vultures mean to seize thee,  
 And take away thy life, while he who bears  
 A father's name, at Delphi still remains.

ATT. You had not fared so ill, I am convinced,  
 If he were present, but now every friend  
 Deserts you.

AND. Is there not a rumour spread  
 Of Peleus' coming ?

ATT. He, though he were here,  
 Is grown too old to aid you.

AND. More than once  
 I sent to him.

ATT. Suppose you that he heeds  
 None of your messengers ?

AND. What means this question ?  
 Wilt thou accept such office ?

ATT. What pretext  
 To colour my long absence from this house  
 Shall I allege ?

AND. Full many are the schemes  
 Which thou, who art a woman, can devise.

ATT. 'Twere dangerous ; for Hermione is watchful.

AND. Dost thou perceive the danger, and renounce  
 Thy friends in their distress ?

ATT. Not thus : forbear  
 To brand me with so infamous a charge ;  
 I go ; for of small value is the life  
 (Whate'er befall me) of a female slave.

[Exit ATTENDANT.]

AND. Proceed : meanwhile I to the conscious air  
 Those plaints and bitter wailings will repeat,

On which I ever dwell. Unhappy women  
 Find comfort in perpetually talking  
 Of what they suffer. But my groans arise  
 Not from one ill, but many ills : the walls  
 Of my loved country razed, my Hector slain,  
 And that hard fortune, in whose yoke bound fast,  
 Thus am I fallen into th' unseemly state  
 Of servitude. We never ought to call  
 Frail mortals happy, at their latest hour  
 Till we behold them to the shades descend.

## ELEGY.

In Helen sure, to Troy's imperial towers  
 Young Paris wafted no engaging bride,  
 But when he led her to those nuptial bowers,  
 Some fiend infernal crossed the billowy tide.

With brandished javelin and devouring flame,  
 For her the Grecian warriors to thy shore,  
 O Ilion, in a thousand vessels came,  
 And drenched thy smould'ring battlements with gore.

Around the walls, my Hector, once thy boast,  
 Fixed to his car, was by Achilles borne,  
 And from my chamber hurried to the coast  
 I veiled my head in servitude forlorn.

Much wept these streaming eyes, when in the dust  
 My city, palace, husband, prostrate lay.  
 Subject to fierce Hermione's disgust,  
 Why should I still behold the hated day ?

Harassed with insults from that haughty dame,  
 Round Thetis' bust my suppliant arms I fling,  
 And here with gushing tears bewail my shame,  
 As from the rock bursts forth the living spring.

## CHORUS, ANDROMACHE.

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

O thou, who seated in this holy space,  
 Hast Thetis' temple thy asylum made,  
 Though Phthia gave me birth, to aid  
 Thee, hapless dame of Asiatic race,

I hither come : would I from direful harms  
 Could guard, could heal the strife  
 'Twixt thee and that indignant wife  
 Hermione, whom ruthless discord arms  
 To punish thee the rival of her charms,  
 A captive, to the genial bed,  
 Who by Achilles' son wert led.

## I. 2.

Aware of fate, th' impending evil weigh,  
 A helpless Phrygian nymph, thou striv'st in vain  
 'Gainst her of Sparta's proud domain :  
 Cease, to this sea-born goddess, cease to pray,  
 And at her blazing shrine no longer stay :  
 For how can it avail  
 To thee with hopeless sorrow pale  
 To suffer all thy beauties to decay,  
 Because thy rulers with oppression sway ?  
 Thou to superior might must bend.  
 Why, feeble as thou art, contend ?

## II. 1.

Yet hasten from the Nereid's lofty seat,  
 Consider that thou tread'st a foreign plain,  
 And that these hostile walls detain  
 In strictest bondage thy reluctant feet,  
 Here none of all those friends, that numerous band,  
 Who shared thy greatness, is at hand,  
 To cheer thee in these days of shame,  
 O wretched, wretched dame.

## II. 2.

A miserable matron thou art come  
 From Troy to our abodes, unwilling guest ;  
 Though mine the sympathizing breast.  
 Yet I through reverence to our lords am dumb,  
 Lest she, who springs from Helen, child of Jove,  
 Should be a witness of that love  
 Which I to thee whose griefs I share,  
 Impelled by pity bear.

## HERMIONE, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

HER. The gorgeous ornaments of gold, these brows  
 Encircling, and the tissued robes I wear,  
 I from Achilles', or from Peleus' stores,  
 As chosen presents when I hither came,  
 Received not, but from Sparta's realm, these gifts  
 My father Menelaus hath bestowed

With a large dower, that I might freely speak  
 Such is the answer which to you I make,  
 O Phthian dames. But thou, who art a slave  
 And captive, wouldest in these abodes usurp  
 Dominion, and expel me ; to my lord  
 Thy drugs have made me odious, hence ensues  
 My barrenness: the Asiatic dames,  
 For these abhorred devices are renowned ;  
 But thee will I subdue, nor shall this dome  
 Of the immortal Nereid, nor her altar  
 Or temple save thee from impending death ;  
 If either man or god should be disposed  
 To rescue thee, 'twere fit, that to atone  
 For the proud thoughts thou in thy happier days  
 Didst nourish, thou shouldst tremble, at my knees  
 Fall low, and sweep the pavement of my house,  
 Sprinkling the waters from a golden urn.  
 Know where thou art : no Hector governs here,  
 No Phrygian Priam doth this sceptre wield ;  
 This is no Chrysa, but a Grecian city.  
 Yet thou, O wretched woman, art arrived  
 At such a pitch of madness, that thou dar'st  
 To sleep e'en with the son of him who slew  
 Thy husband, and a brood of children bear  
 To him whose hands yet reek with Phrygian gore,  
 Such is the whole abhorred barbarian race ;  
 The father with his daughter, the vile son  
 With his own mother, with her brother too  
 The sister, sins, friends by their dearest friends  
 Are murdered ; deeds like these no wholesome law  
 Prohibits : introduce not among us  
 Such crimes, for 'tis unseemly that one man  
 Possess two women ; the fond youth who seeks  
 Domestic harmony, confines his love  
 To one fair partner of the genial bed.

CHOR. The female sex are envious, and pursue  
 With an incessant hatred those who share  
 Their nuptial joys.

AND. Alas ! impetuous youth  
 Proves baleful to mankind, and there are none  
 Who act with justice in their blooming years.  
 But what I dread is this, lest slavery curb  
 My tongue, though I have many truths to utter :  
 In this dispute with you, if I prevail,  
 That very triumph may become my bane :  
 For those of haughty spirits ill endure  
 The most prevailing arguments when urged  
 By their inferiors. Yet my better cause  
 I will not thus betray. Say, youthful princess,



What reasons of irrefragable force  
 Enable me to drive you from the couch  
 Of your own lawful husband? to the Phrygians  
 Is Sparta grown inferior, and hath fortune  
 On us conferred the palm? Do you behold me  
 Still free? elate with youth, a vigorous frame,  
 The wide extent of empire I possess,  
 And number of my friends, am I desirous  
 To occupy these mansions in your stead,  
 That in your stead I might bring forth a race  
 Of slaves, th' appendages of my distress?  
 Will any one endure (if you produce  
 No children) that my sons should be the kings  
 Of Phthia?—the Greeks love me for the sake  
 Of Hector, I too was forsooth obscure,  
 And not a queen, in Troy. Your husband's hate,  
 Not from my drugs, but from your soul, unsuited  
 For social converse, springs: there is a philtre  
 To gain his love. Not beauty, but the virtues,  
 O woman, to the partners of our bed  
 Afford delight. But if it sting your pride  
 That Sparta's a vast city, while you treat  
 Scyros with scorn, amidst the poor, display  
 Your riches, and of Menelaus speak  
 As greater than Achilles; hence your lord  
 Abhors you. For a woman, though bestowed  
 On a vile mate, should learn to yield, nor strive  
 For the pre-eminence. In Thrace o'erspread  
 With snow, if you were wedded to a king,  
 Who to his bed takes many various dames,  
 Would you have slain them? you would cast disgrace  
 On your whole sex by such unsated lust;  
 Base were the deed: for though our souls are warmed  
 With more intense desires than those of men  
 We modestly conceal them. For thy sake  
 I, O my dearest Hector, loved the objects  
 Of thy affections, whene'er Venus' wiles  
 Caused thee to err, and at my breast full oft  
 Nourished thy spurious children, that in nought  
 Thy joys I might embitter: acting thus  
 I won him by my virtues. But you tremble  
 E'en if the drops of Heaven's transparent dew  
 Rest on your husband. Strive not to transcend  
 Your mother in a wild excess of love,  
 O woman. For the children, if endued  
 With reason, such examples should avoid  
 Of those who bore them, as corrupt the soul.

CHOR. As far as possible, O queen, comply  
 With my advice, and in mild terms accost her.

HER. What mean'st thou by this arrogance of speech,  
This vain debate, as if thou still wert chaste,  
And I had strayed from virtue's path?

AND. The words  
You have been using, now at least are void  
Of modesty.

HER. O woman, may this breast  
Harbour no soul like thine.

AND. Though bashful youth  
Glow on your cheek, indecent is your language.

HER. Thou by thy actions more than by thy words  
Hast proved the malice which to me thou bear'st.

AND. Why will you not conceal th' inglorious pangs  
Of jealous love?

HER. What woman but resents  
Such wrongs, and deems them great?

AND. The use some make  
Of these misfortunes adds to their renown :  
But shame waits those who are devoid of wisdom.

HER. We dwell not in a city where prevail  
Barbarian laws.

AND. In Phrygia or in Greece  
Base actions are with infamy attended.

HER. Though most expert in every subtle art,  
Yet die thou must.

AND. Behold you Thetis' image  
Turning its eyes on you?

HER. She loathes thy country  
Where her Achilles treacherously was slain.

AND. Your mother Helen caused his death, not I.

HER. Wouldst thou retrace still farther the sad tale  
Of our misfortunes?

AND. I restrain my tongue.

HER. Speak to me now on that affair which caused  
My coming hither.

AND. All I say is this :  
You have not so much wisdom as you need.

HER. From this pure temple of the sea-born goddess  
Wilt thou depart?

AND. Not while I live : you first  
Must slay, then drag me hence.

HER. I am resolved  
How to proceed, and wait my lord's return  
No longer.

AND. Nor will I before he come  
Surrender up myself.

HER. With flaming brands  
Hence will I drive thee, and no deference pay  
To thy entreaties.

AND. Kindle them; the gods  
Will view the deed.

HER. The scourge too is prepared.

AND. Transpierce this bosom, deluge with my gore  
The altar of the goddess, you by her  
Shall be at length o'ertaken.

HER. From thy cradle,  
Trained up and hardened in barbarian pride,  
Canst thou endure to die? from this asylum  
Soon will I rouse thee by thy own consent,  
I with such baits am furnished, but conceal  
My purpose, which th' event itself ere long  
Will make conspicuous. Keep a steady seat,  
For though by molten lead thou wert enclosed  
Hence would I rouse thee, ere Achilles' son,  
Whom thou confid'st in, to this land return.

*Exit HERMIONE.*

AND. In him I place my still unshaken trust.  
Yet is it strange that the celestial powers,  
To heal the serpent's venom, have assigned  
Expedients, but no remedy devised  
Against an evil woman who surpasses  
Or vipers' stings or the consuming flame :  
Thus baleful is our influence on mankind.

#### CHORUS.

##### ODE.

##### I. 1.

The winged son of Maia and of Jove  
To many sorrowful events gave birth,  
And scattered discord o'er the bleeding earth,  
When he through sacred Ida's piny grove  
Guided the car of three immortal dames,  
The golden prize of beauty to obtain,  
In hateful strife engaged, who urged their claims) ;  
To where in his mean hut abode a lonely swain.

##### I. 2.

No sooner had they reached the destined bower,  
Than in the limpid spring her snowy frame  
Each goddess laved ; to Priam's son then came  
With artful speeches of such winning power  
As might beguile the rash and amorous boy :  
Venus prevailed ; her words, though sweet their sound,  
Proved of destructive consequence to Troy,  
Whose stately bulwarks hence lie levelled with the ground.

## II. 1.

When new-born Paris first beheld the light,  
 Would that his mother, o'er her head, this brand  
 Ordained by Heaven to fire his native land,  
 Had cast, before he dwelt on Ida's height.  
 Unheeded from the bay's prophetic shade  
 Exclaimed Cassandra : " Let the child be slain ;  
 Kill him, or Priam's empire is betrayed."  
 Frantic she raved and sued to every prince in vain.

## II. 2.

Deaf was each prince, or Ilion ne'er had felt  
 The servile yoke, nor hadst thou, hapless fair,  
 Beneath these roofs, encompassed by despair,  
 And subject to a rigid master, dwelt.  
 O had he died, the fated toil of Greece,  
 That stubborn war through ten revolving years,  
 Had roused no heroes from the lap of peace,  
 Nor caused the widow's shrieks, the hoary father's tears.

MENELAUS, MOLOSSUS, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

MEN. Your son I hither bring, whom from this fane  
 With secrecy, you to another house,  
 Without my daughter's knowledge, had removed.  
 You boasted that this image of the goddess  
 To you, and those who hid him, would afford  
 A sure asylum : but your deep-laid craft,  
 O woman, cannot baffle Menelaus.  
 If you depart not hence, he in your stead  
 Shall be the victim ; therefore well revolve  
 Th' important question ; had you rather die,  
 Or, with his streaming gore, let him atone  
 The foul offence 'gainst me and 'gainst my daughter  
 By you committed ?

AND. Thou, O vain opinion,  
 Hast with renown puffed up full many men  
 Who were of no account. I deem those blest  
 On whom with truth such honour is bestowed ;  
 But them who by fallacious means obtain it  
 I hold unworthy of possessing fame,  
 When all their seeming wisdom but arises  
 From Fortune's gifts. Thou with the bravest chiefs  
 Of Greece, from Priam erst didst wrest his Troy ;  
 E'en thou who art so mean as to inspire  
 Thy daughter with resentment 'gainst a child,  
 And strive with me a miserable captive ;  
 Unworthy of thy conquest over Troy

Thee do I hold, and Troy yet more disgraced  
By such a victor. Some indeed there are  
To all appearance upright, who awhile  
Outwardly glitter, though they in their hearts  
Are on a level with the worthless bulk  
Of mortals, and superior but in wealth  
Whose power is great. This conference let us end  
O Menelaus, be it now supposed  
I by thy daughter am already slain :  
'Twill be impossible for her to 'scape  
From the pollution ruthless murder brings ;  
Thou too by many tongues wilt be accused  
Of this vile deed, with her will they confound  
Thee the abettor. But if I preserve  
My life, are ye resolved to slay my son ?  
How will the father tamely bear the death  
Of his loved offspring ? he was not esteemed  
At Troy so void of courage. He is gone  
Whither his duty calls. Soon will the chief  
Act worthy of the race from which he springs,  
The hoary Peleus, and his dauntless sire  
Achilles, he from these abodes will cast  
Thy daughter forth, and when thou to another  
In marriage giv'st her, what hast thou to say  
On her behalf ? " That from a worthless lord  
Her wisdom drove her ? " This would be a falsehood  
Too gross. But who would wed her ? till grown grey  
In widowhood, shall she beneath thy roofs  
Fix her loathed residence ? O wretched man,  
The rising conflux of unnumbered woes  
Behold'st thou not ? hadst thou not rather find  
Thy daughter wronged by concubines, than suffering  
Th' indignities I speak of ? we from trifles  
Such grievous mischiefs ought not to create ;  
Nor if we women are a deadly bane,  
To the degenerate nature of our sex  
Should men conform. If I pernicious drugs  
Have to thy daughter ministered, and been,  
As she pretends, the cause of her abortion,  
Immediately will I without reluctance,  
And without grovelling at this altar's base,  
To any rigid punishment submit  
Inflicted by thy son-in-law, from whom  
I surely merit as severe revenge  
For having made him childless. Such am I :  
But in thy temper I perceive one cause  
Of just alarm, since in that luckless strife  
About a woman, and a vile one too,  
Thou the famed Phrygian city didst destroy.

CHOR. Too freely hast thou spoken, in a tone  
Which ill becomes thy sex, and that high soul  
The bounds of wisdom hath o'erleaped.

MEN.

O woman,

So small an object, as you rightly judge,  
Deserves not the attention of my realm,  
Nor that of Greece. But learn this obvious truth :  
To any man whate'er he greatly needs,  
Is of more worth by far than taking Troy.  
My daughter I assist, because I deem it  
A wrong of great importance should she lose  
Her bridal rights : for every woman looks  
On all beside as secondary ills :  
But if she from her husband's arms be torn,  
Seems reft of life itself. That Phthia's prince  
Direct my servants, and that his obey  
Me and my race, is fitting : for true friends  
Have no distinct possessions, but hold all  
In common. While I wait for the return  
Of her long absent lord, should I neglect  
My daughter's interests, I were weak, not wise.  
But leave this shrine of Thetis : for the child  
Shall if you bleed escape th' impending doom :  
Him, if you die not, will I slay, since fate  
Of you or him the forfeit life demands.

AND. Ah me ! a bitter and unwelcome choice  
Of life on terms like these hast thou proposed ;  
Wretch that I am ! for whether I decline  
Or make such option, I am wretched still.  
O thou, who by a trifling wrong provoked,  
Committ'st great crimes, attend : for what offence  
Wouldst thou bereave me of my life ? what city  
Have I betrayed ? what child of thine destroyed ?  
What mansion fired ? I to my master's bed  
By force was dragged : yet me alone, not him  
The author of that crime, thou mean'st to slay.  
Thou, the first cause o'erlooking, on th' effect  
Which it produces, vent'st thy rage. What woes  
Encompass wretched me ! alas ! my country !  
How dreadful are the wrongs which I endure !  
But wherefore was I doomed to bear a child,  
And to the burden under which I groan  
Add a new burden ? what delight can life  
To me afford ? or on what fortunes past  
Or present should I turn these eyes which saw  
The corse of Hector by the victor's car  
Whirled round the walls, and wretched Troy a heap  
Of blazing ruins ? I meantime a slave  
By my dishevelled hair was dragged aboard  
The Argive navy ; when I reached the coast

Of Phthia, and cohabited with those  
 Who slew my Hector : but why lavish plaints  
 On past calamities, without deploring  
 Or taking a due estimate of those  
 Which now impend ? ) I had this only son  
 My life's last comfort left, and they who take  
 Delight in deeds of cruelty, would slay him ;  
 Yet to preserve my miserable life  
 He shall not perish : for auspicious hopes,  
 Could he be saved, his future days attend :  
 But if I died not for my son, reproach  
 Would be my portion. Lo ! I leave the altar  
 And now am in thy hands, stab, slay me, bind,  
 Strain hard the deadly noose. My son, thy mother,  
 To rescue thee from an untimely grave,  
 Descends the shades beneath ; if thou escape  
 The ruthless grasp of fate, remember me  
 How miserably I suffered ; and with kisses,  
 At his return, when thou goest forth to meet  
 Thy father, when a flood of tears thou shedd'st,  
 And cling'st around him with those pliant arms,  
 Inform him how I acted. All men hold  
 Their children dear as life ; but he who scorns them  
 Because he ne'er experienced what it is  
 To be a father, though with fewer griefs  
 Attended, but enjoys imperfect bliss.

*[Kisses, and advances from the altar.]*

CHOR. I with compassion to this moving tale  
 Have listened ; for distress, to all mankind,  
 Though strangers, must seem piteous : but on thee,  
 O Menelaus, 'tis incumbent now  
 To reconcile thy daughter, and this captive,  
 That she may from her sorrows be released.

MEN. Seize her, and bind her hands ; for she shall hear  
 No pleasing language : I proposed to slay  
 Your son, that you might leave that hallowed altar  
 Of Thetis, and thus craftily induced you  
 To fall into my hands, and meet your death ;  
 Be well assured, such is the present state  
 Of your affairs : as for that boy, on him  
 My daughter shall pass judgment, or to kill,  
 Or spare him : but now enter these abodes,  
 That you may learn, slave as you are, to treat  
 Those who are free no longer with disdain.

AND. Thou hast overreached me by thy treacherous arts ;  
 Alas ! I am betrayed.

MEN. Proclaim these tidings  
 To all men ; for I shall not contradict them.

AND. By those who dwell beside Eurotas' stream  
 Are such base frauds called wisdom ?



MEN. Both at Troy  
And there, 'tis just the injured should retaliate.  
AND. Believ'st thou that the gods are gods no longer,  
Nor wield the bolt of vengeance?

MEN. We must look  
To that : but you shall die.

AND. And wilt thou seize  
This unfledged bird, to slay him?

MEN. No, I will not,  
But give him to my daughter, who must act  
As she thinks fit.

AND. Then how, alas, my son !  
Can I sufficiently bewail thy fate?

MEN. "Him," 'twas but now with arrogance you said,  
"Auspicious hopes attend."

AND. Ye worst of foes  
To all mankind, inhabitants of Sparta !  
Expert in treacherous counsels, still devising  
New falsehoods, curst artificers of mischief,  
Your paths are crooked, yet though void of worth,  
Through Greece by circumspection ye uphold  
An undeserved pre-eminence. What crimes,  
What murders, what a thirst for abject gain  
Characterize your realm ! with specious tongue  
Uttering a language foreign to your heart,  
Are ye not ever caught ? Perdition seize you !  
Death is less grievous than thou deem'st to me  
Who date my utter ruin from that hour  
When Ilion's wretched city was involved  
In the same fate with my illustrious lord,  
Whose spear oft drove thee trembling from the field  
Into thy ships : but now against his wife  
A formidable warrior art thou come  
To murder me : strike, for this coward tongue  
Shall never leave thine and thy daughter's shame  
Unpublished. If in Sparta thou art great,  
So was I erst in Ilion ; but exult not  
In my disasters, for on thee ere long  
The same reverse of fortune may attend.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

'Two rival consorts ne'er can I approve,  
Or sons, the source of strife, their birth who owe  
To different mothers ; hence connubial love  
Is banished, and the mansion teems with woe.



One blooming nymph let cautious husbands wed,  
And share with her alone an unpoilluted bed.

## I. 2.

No prudent city, no well-governed state,  
More than a single potentate will own ;  
Their subjects droop beneath the grievous weight  
When two bear rule, and discord shakes the throne ;  
And if two bards awake their sounding lyres  
E'en the harmonious Muse a cruel strife inspires,

## II. I.

To aid the bark, when prosperous gales arise,  
Two jarring pilots shall misguide the helm :  
Weak is a multitude when all are wise,  
One simpler monarch could have saved the realm.  
Let a sole chief the house or empire sway,  
And all who hope for bliss their lord's behests obey.

## II. 2.

This truth hath Menelaus' daughter shown,  
Furious she comes the victim to destroy ;  
And, that their blood may nuptial wrongs atone,  
The Phrygian captive, and that hapless boy,  
With impious rage unjust would cause to bleed ;  
May pity, awful queen, thy lifted arm impede !

But I before these doors beheld the pair  
On whom the fatal sentence now is passed.  
Thou wretched dame, and wretched child who diest  
Because thy mother to a foreign bed  
By force was dragged, in her imputed guilt  
Thou wert not an accomplice, thou thy lords  
Hast not offended.

AND. To the realms beneath,  
Lo, I am hurried, with these bloody hands  
Fast bound in galling chains.

MOL. I too, O mother,  
Under thy wing, to those loathed shades descend  
A victim. O ye lords of Phthia's land,  
And thou, my father, succour those thou lov'st.

AND. Cling to thy mother's bosom, O my child,  
Together let us die.

MOL. Ah me ! how grievous  
My sufferings are ! too clearly I perceive  
That I, and thou my mother, both are wretched.

MEN. Go both together to th' infernal realm ;  
For ye from hostile turrets hither came.  
Although the cause why you and he must bleed  
Is not the same, my sentence takes away

Your life, and my Hermione's your son's.  
 The highest folly were it to permit  
 A foe to live and vex us, whom with ease  
 We might despatch, and from our house remove  
 Such danger.

AND. O my husband, would to Heaven  
 I had thy arm to aid me ; and thy spear,  
 Thou son of Priam.

MOL. Wretched me ! what charm  
 Can I devise t' avert impending fate ?

AND. My son, implore the mercy of our lord  
 Clasp his knees.

MOL. Dear monarch, spare my life,

AND. Tears from these eyes burst forth like trickling drops  
 By the sun's heat forced from a solid rock,  
 Wretch that I am !

MOL. What remedy, alas !  
 For these dire evils can my soul devise ?

MEN. Why dost thou idly grovel at my feet  
 With fruitless supplications, while I stand  
 Firm as a rock, or as th' un pitying wave ?  
 Such conduct serves my interests : no affection  
 To thee I bear, because my morn of life  
 Was wasted in the conflict, ere I took  
 Troy and thy mother, whose society  
 Thou in the realms of Pluto shalt enjoy.

PELEUS, MENELAUS, ANDROMACHE, MOLOSSUS, CHORUS.

CHOR. Peleus, I see, draws near, his aged feet  
 With eager haste advancing.

PEL. You, and him  
 Who stands presiding o'er a murderous deed,  
 What means this uproar that disturbs the house,  
 I question, and what practices are these  
 Ye carry on unauthorized by law ?  
 O Menelaus, stay thy furious hand,  
 And let not execution thus outstrip  
 All righteous judgment. O my friends, lead on ;  
 For such a dread emergency appears  
 T' admit of no delay. Could I regain  
 That youthful vigour which I erst enjoyed  
 As prosperous breezes aid the floating sails,  
 This captive would I favour. Say, what right  
 Have they to bind your hands, and drag along  
 You and your son ? for like the bleating mother,  
 Led forth to slaughter with her lamb, you perish,  
 While I and your unwitting lord are absent.

AND. They, as thou seest, O venerable man,  
 Me and my son thus bear to instant death.

What shall I say to thee, whom I with speed  
 Not by one single messenger but thousands  
 Have sent for? sure thou, of the fatal strife  
 In these divided mansions, with his daughter,  
 To which I owe my ruin, must have heard :  
 And from the violated shrine of Thetis,  
 Who bore to thee a noble son, the goddess  
 Whom thou rever'st e'en now with brutal force  
 Me have they torn, nor judged my cause, nor wait  
 For absent Neoptolemus, but, knowing  
 That I and that this child who hath committed  
 No fault, are left alone and unprotected,  
 Would slay us both. But, O thou aged man,  
 Thus prostrate on my knees, to thee I sue,  
 And, though this hand must not presume to touch  
 Thy honoured beard, conjure thee by the gods,  
 Rescue us, or to thy eternal shame  
 Both he and I must miserably bleed.

PEL. My orders are that you those galling chains  
 Unbind and loose her hands, else will I make  
 The disobedient weep.

MEN. But I, your equal,  
 Who have much more authority o'er her,  
 Forbid them.

PEL. Com'st thou hither to direct  
 My household? is it not enough for thee  
 To rule thy Spartans?

MEN. Her I took at Troy.

PEL. She, to reward his valour, was bestowed  
 Upon my grandson.

MEN. Doth not all he owns,  
 To me, and what is mine, to him belong?

PEL. For honest purposes, but not for crimes  
 And murderous violence.

MEN. You ne'er shall take her  
 Out of my hands.

PEL. Thy head I with this sceptre  
 Will smite.

MEN. Draw near; if you presume to touch me,  
 Soon shall you rue such outrage.

PEL. O thou villain,  
 Sprung from a race of impious sires, what right  
 To be accounted an illustrious man,  
 And numbered with the truly brave, hast thou,  
 Who by a Phrygian wanderer wert deprived  
 Of thy fair consort, after thou hadst left  
 Thy house unbarred and destitute of guards,  
 As if thou in thy mansions hadst possessed  
 A virtuous dame, though she of all her sex

Was the most dissolute? nor if she would  
Can any Spartan nymph be chaste? for wandering  
From their own homes, distinguished by bare legs,  
And zoneless vest, they with young men contend  
In swiftness and in wrestling; I such customs  
Hold in abhorrence. Is there any room  
For wonder if the women prove unchaste  
Whom thus you educate? thy Helen ought  
To have proposed these questions, ere she left  
Her native realm, regardless of thy love,  
And by that youthful paramour seduced,  
Wantonly fled into a foreign land.  
Yet for her sake didst thou that numerous host  
Of Greeks collect, and lead them to assail  
The Phrygian ramparts. Thou that beauteous dame  
Shouldst rather have despised, nor in her cause  
Wielded the javelin, when thou found'st her worthless,  
But suffered her in Ilium to remain,  
And sent rich gifts to Paris on these terms,  
That to thy house she never should return.  
But thou, instead of suffering these just motives  
To make their due impression on thy soul,  
Full many valiant warriors hast destroyed,  
Made th' aged matron childless, and deprived  
Of his illustrious sons the hoary sire.  
Numbered with those who owe to thee thy ruin  
Am wretched I: for like some evil genius  
In thee do these indignant eyes behold  
The murderer of Achilles: thou alone,  
Save by the missile shaft, unwounded cam'st  
From Ilium's hostile shores; in burnished chests  
Didst thou bear thither the same glittering arms  
Which thou bear'st back again. Before he wedded,  
I warned my grandson to form no connection  
With thee, nor into these abodes admit  
The brood of that adult'ress; for the daughters  
Their mother emulate in deeds of shame.  
Look well to this, ye suitors, and select  
The damsel with maternal worth endued.  
Then with what scorn didst thou thy brother treat,  
Commanding him 'gainst reason to transgress,  
And sacrifice his daughter. Thou such fears,  
Lest thou that execrable wife shouldst lose,  
Didst entertain. When thou hadst taken Troy,  
This too I urge against thee, though thou hadst  
Thy consort in thy power, thou didst not slay her,  
But when her throbbing bosom thou beheld'st  
Didst cast away thy sword, receive her kisses,  
And soothe the fears of her who had betrayed thee.

O worthless miscreant, whom the Cyprian Queen  
Hath thus debas'd ! thou after this intrud'st  
Into my grandson's palace, in his absence  
Committ'st these outrages, and basely slay'st  
A miserable woman, and her child,  
Thee and thy daughter who shall cause to weep  
Though trebly illegitimate his birth.  
Oft the parched heath, when duly tilled, exceeds  
The richest soil, and greater instances  
Of virtue are in many a bastard found  
Than in the lawfully begotten race.  
But take thy daughter hence. Far better is it  
To form affinity and strictest friendship  
With a poor man of worth, than him who joins  
Iniquity with wealth : but as for thee,  
Thou art a thing of nought.

**CHOR.** Among mankind,  
Oft from a small beginning doth the tongue  
Great strife occasion : but the wise beware  
Of entering on a contest with their friend.

MEN. Why do we speak in such exalted terms  
Of aged men, as if they were endued  
With wisdom, though in former days supposed  
By the whole Grecian race to judge aright?  
When you, O Peleus, who derive your birth  
From an illustrious sire, and with my house  
So nearly are connected, hold a language  
Disgraceful to yourself, and slander me,  
For a barbarian dame, whom from this land  
You ought to banish far beyond the Nile,  
Beyond the Phasis, and applaud my vengeance;  
Because she comes from Asiatic shores,  
Where many valiant Grecian chiefs lie slain.  
And hath in part been guilty of the blood  
Of your famed son: for Paris, by whose shaft,  
Transpierced, Achilles perished, was the brother,  
And she the wife of Hector: yet you enter  
The same abode with her, the genial board  
With her partake, allow her to bring forth  
Under your roofs an execrable brood.  
These mischiefs both to you and me, old man,  
Foreseeing, have I snatched her from your hands  
With a design to kill her. But, O say,  
(For there is nought of meanness in our holding  
This conference), if my daughter bear no child,  
And she have sons, will you appoint them lords  
Of this your Phthian land? shall they who spring  
From a barbarian race, o'er Greeks bear rule?  
Am I, because I hate injustice, void

Of understanding, and are you discreet?  
 Reflect on this ; had you bestowed your daughter  
 On any citizen, were she thus treated,  
 Would you sit down and bear her wrongs in silence ?  
 I deem you would not. Why then with such harshness  
 Speak you in favour of a foreign dame  
 Against your nearest friends ? as great a right  
 To vengeance as her husband, hath the wife  
 Whom her lord injures : for while he whose doors  
 An unchaste consort enters, in his hands  
 Hath power to right himself, a woman's strength  
 Lies only in her parents and her friends.  
 My daughter, therefore, am I bound to aid :  
 You show the marks of age : for while you talk  
 Of that famed war I waged, you more befriended me  
 Than if you had been silent. Deep in woe  
 Was Helen plunged, not by her own consent  
 But by the gods : and this event hath proved  
 To Greece most advantageous, for its sons  
 Who knew not how till then to wield the spear,  
 Grew valiant. From experience, best of tutors,  
 Men gather all the knowledge they possess.  
 But when I saw my consort, in forbearing  
 To take away her life, I acted wisely :  
 And would that you had done like me, nor slain  
 Your brother Phocus ; this to you I speak  
 Through mere benevolence, and not in wrath :  
 But if resentment o'er your soul usurp  
 An empire, such intemperance of the tongue  
 Will be in you more shameful, while my wishes  
 I by a prudent forethought shall attain.

CHOR. Now both desist (for this were better far)  
 From such unprofitable strife of words,  
 O ye will both offend.

PEL. Ah me ! through Greece  
 What mischievous opinions have prevailed !  
 When with the spoils of vanquished foes, the host  
 A trophy rear, they think not how 'twas gained  
 By those brave soldiers who endure the toil  
 Of battle, while their general bears away  
 All the renown : though he was only one  
 Who stood 'midst thousands brandishing his spear,  
 Nor any single combatant surpassed,  
 He gains a larger portion of applause.  
 The venerable rulers of a city,  
 Placed in exalted stations, yet devoid  
 Of any real merit, overlook  
 The populace, though many in the crowd  
 Of their inferiors are more wise than they,

If haply courage and an honest zeal  
 Unite to place them in the public view.  
 Thou and thy brother thus are swollen with pride,  
 From having led those troops to conquer Troy,  
 And triumph in the sufferings of your friends.  
 But henceforth will I teach thee not to look  
 On Paris, Ida's shepherd, as a foe,  
 More terrible than Peleus. If with speed  
 Thou quit not these abodes, and take away  
 Thy childless daughter, my indignant grandson,  
 By her dishevelled hair around the palace  
 Will drag this barren dame, who stung with envy,  
 Cannot endure the fruitful mother's joys.  
 But, if she prove so luckless as to bare  
 No issue, ought she therefore to deprive us  
 Of our posterity? Begone, ye slaves,  
 That I may see who dares obstruct my loosing  
 Her hands. Rise up: though trembling with old age,  
 Your chains can I unbind. O worthless man,  
 Hast thou thus galled her hands? didst thou suppose  
 Thou held'st a bull or lion in the snare?  
 Or didst thou shudder lest she should snatch up  
 A sword, and wreak just vengeance on thy head?  
 Come hither to these sheitering arms, my child,  
 Unbind thy mother's chains; in Phthia, thee  
 I'll educate, to them a bitter foe.  
 Should Sparta's sons by the protended spear  
 Obtain no fame, nor in th' embattled field  
 Their prowess signalize, be well assured  
 Ye have no other merit.

CHOR. Old men talk  
 With freedom, and their vehemence of soul  
 Is hard to be restrained.

MEN. Extremely prone  
 Are you to slander; much against my will  
 I came to Phthia, and am here resolved  
 That I will neither do nor suffer aught  
 Disgraceful; but to my own home with speed  
 Am I returning, and have little time  
 In vain debates to lavish: for a city  
 Not far from Sparta's gates and erst a friend  
 Is waging war against us: I would lead  
 My hardy squadrons forth t' assail the foe,  
 And utterly subdue them. To my wish  
 Soon as this great affair I shall have settled,  
 Hither will I return, and face to face,  
 When I my reasons to my son-in-law  
 Have in the clearest terms proposed, will hear  
 What he can urge; and if he punish her,



And for the future courteously to me  
 Demean himself, from me he in return  
 Shall meet with courtesy; but if he rage,  
 He of my rage the dire effects shall feel:  
 For still such treatment as his deeds deserve  
 Shall he experience. But I am not hurt  
 By these injurious words of yours; for like  
 Some disembodied ghost, you have a voice,  
 Although you are not able to do aught  
 But merely speak. [Exit MENELAUS.]

PEL. Lead on, my boy; here take  
 Thy station under these protecting arms;  
 And thou too, O thou miserable dame,  
 Driven hither by the furious storm; at length  
 Into a quiet haven are ye come.

AND. On thee and thy descendants may the gods  
 Shower every blessing, venerable man,  
 For having saved this child, and wretched me;  
 Yet O beware, lest in some lonely spot  
 They suddenly assail us, and by force  
 Drag me away, perceiving thou art old,  
 That I am a weak woman, and my son  
 Is but an infant: all precautions use,  
 Else we, who have escaped them, may again  
 Be caught.

PEL. Forbear to utter, in such language  
 As this, the dictates of a woman's fear.  
 Advance, who dares to touch you? he shall weep.  
 For with the blessing of th' immortal gods,  
 And by unnumbered troops of valiant horse,  
 And infantry supported, I bear rule  
 Over the Phthian land. I am robust,  
 Nor, as you deem, impaired by palsied age.  
 Were I, opposed in battle, but to look  
 On such a man as this, old as I am,  
 An easy conquest soon should I obtain.  
 Superior is the veteran, if with courage  
 Inspired, to many youths: for what avails  
 A vigorous body with a coward's heart?

[Exeunt PELEUS, ANDROMACHE, and MOLOSSUS.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

My wish were this; or never to be born,  
 Or to descend from generous sires, and share  
 The blessings which attend a wealthy heir.  
 If heaviest woes assail, ne'er left forlorn



Without a friend are they of nobler race,  
 Hereditary trophies deck their head :  
 The records of the brave with joy we trace,  
 No distant age their memory can efface,  
 For virtue's torch unquenched pours radiance o'er the dead.

## II.

Better is conquest, when we gain our right  
 By no reproachful means, no deeds of shame,  
 Than if to envy we expose our fame,  
 And trample on the laws with impious might.  
 Such laurels which at first too sweetly bloom,  
 Ere long are withered by the frost of time,  
 And scorn pursues their wearers to the tomb.  
 I in my household or the state presume  
 To seek that power alone which rules without a crime.

## III.

O veteran, sprung from Æacus, thy spear  
 Chilled the Lapithæ with fear,  
 And from their hills the Centaurs drove.  
 When glory called, and prosperous gales  
 Swelled the Argo's daring sails,  
 Intrepid didst thou pass that strait  
 Where ruin oft the crashing bark attends,  
 And ocean's foam descends  
 From the Symplegades' obstructing height.  
 Next didst thou land on perjured Ilion's shore,  
 With Hercules illustrious son of Jove,  
 Then first its bulwarks streamed with gore :  
 Till crowned with fame a partner of his toil,  
 Europe again thou sought'st and Phthia's frozen soil.

## THE NURSE OF HERMIONE, CHORUS.

NUR. How doth a rapid series of events  
 The most disastrous, O my dearest friends,  
 This day invade us ! for within these doors  
 Hermione my mistress, by her sire  
 Forsaken, and grown conscious of the guilt  
 She hath incurred, by that attempt to murder  
 Andromache and her unhappy son,  
 Resolves to die, because she dreads, lest fired  
 With indignation at her guilt, her lord  
 Should cast her forth with scorn, or take away  
 Her life, because she purposed to have slain  
 The innocent. The servants who attend  
 Can hardly by their vigilance prevent her  
 From fixing round her neck the deadly noose,  
 Or snatch the dagger from her hand, so great

Is her affliction, and she now confesses  
That she has done amiss. My strength's exhausted  
In striving to withhold my royal mistress  
From perishing by an ignoble death.  
But enter ye these mansions, and attempt  
To save her life, for strangers can persuade  
Far better than old friends.

CHOR. We hear the voice  
Of her attendants from within confirm  
Th' intelligence thou hither cam'st to bring :  
That hapless woman seems just on the point  
Of showing with what rage she by her guilt  
Is hurried on : for lo, she rushes forth  
From yon abodes, already hath she 'scaped  
Her servants' hands, and is resolved to die.

HERMIONE, NURSE, CHORUS.

HER. Ah me ! these ringlets how will I tear off,  
How rend my cheeks !

NUR. What mean'st thou, O my daughter ?  
Wilt thou thus injure that fair frame ?

HER. Away,  
O thou slight veil, I pluck thee from my head,  
And toss thy scattered fragments in the air.

NUR. Cover thy bosom with the decent robe.

HER. Why with a robe my bosom should I hide ?  
The crimes I have committed 'gainst my lord  
Are clear, well known, and cannot be concealed.

NUR. Grief'st thou because thou hast formed schemes  
to slay  
Thy rival ?

HER. I with many groans bewail  
Those hostile darings, execrable wretch,  
Wretch that I am, an object of just hate  
To all mankind.

NUR. Thy husband such offence  
Will pardon.

HER. From my hand why didst thou snatch  
The sword ? Restore, restore it, O my friends,  
That I this bosom may transpierce. Why force me  
To quit yon pendant noose ?

NUR. In thy distraction  
Shall I forsake and leave thee thus to die ?

HER. Where shall I find (inform me, O ye Fates)  
The blazing pyre, ascend the craggy rock,  
Plunge in the billows, or amidst the woods  
On a steep mountain waste the life I loathe,  
That after death the gods beneath may take me  
To their protection ?

CHOR. Why wouldst thou make efforts  
So violent? some mischiefs sent by Heaven  
Sooner or later visit all mankind.

HER. Me like a stranded bark, thou, O my sire,  
Hast left forsaken and without an oar.  
To thee I owe my ruin. I no longer  
In these my bridal mansions can reside.  
To the propitious statues of what God  
With suppliant haste shall I repair, or fall  
At a slave's knees, myself an abject slave?  
I from the land of Phthia, like a bird  
Upborne on azure wings, would speed my flight,  
Or imitate that ship whose dashing oars  
'Twixt the Cyanean straits first urged their way.

NUR. As little, O my daughter, can I praise  
That vehemence which caused thee to transgress  
Against the Trojan dame, as these thy fears  
Which are immoderate. For such slight offence  
Thy lord, misled by the pernicious tongue  
Of a barbarian woman, from his couch  
Will not expel thee: for thou art not his  
By right of conquest, borne from vanquished Troy;  
But thee, the daughter of a mighty king,  
He with abundant dower, and from a city  
Most flourishing, received: nor will thy sire,  
His child forsaking, as thou dread'st, permit thee  
To be cast forth: but enter these abodes,  
Nor show thyself without, lest some affront  
Thou shouldst receive if haply thou art seen  
Before these doors. [Exit NURSE.]

CHOR. Behold a man, whose dress  
Is of such different fashion that it speaks  
The foreigner, comes swiftly from the gate.

ORESTES, HERMIONE, CHORUS.

ORE. Is this th' abode of great Achilles' son,  
The regal mansion, O ye foreign dames?

CHOR. It is as thou hast said. But who art thou  
That ask'st this question?

ORE. Agamemnon's son,  
And Clytemnestra's; but my name's Orestes:  
I to Dodona, th' oracle of Jove,  
Am on my road; but since I now have reached  
The land of Phthia, first would I inquire  
How fares Hermione, the Spartan dame,  
My kinswoman; doth she yet live and prosper?  
For though from me far distant be the land  
In which she now resides, she still is dear.

HER. O son of Agamemnon, who thus make

Your seasonable appearance, like the haven  
 To mariners amidst a furious storm,  
 Take pity, I implore you by those knees,  
 On me a wretch whose inauspicious fortunes  
 You witness. Hence around your knees I fling  
 These arms, which ought to prove of equal force  
 With hallowed branches by the suppliant borne.

ORE. What's this? am I deceived? or do my eyes  
 Indeed behold the queen of these abodes,  
 And Menelaus' daughter?

HER. Th' only child  
 Whom to the Spartan monarch Helen bore.  
 Mistake me not.

ORE. O Phœbus, healing power,  
 Protect us! But what dire mischance hath happened?  
 Or from the gods, or human foes, proceed  
 The evils thou endur'st?

HER. Some from myself,  
 But others from the husband whom I wedded  
 The rest from one of the immortal gods.  
 I utterly am ruined.

ORE. What afflictions  
 Can any woman who's yet childless feel  
 But those which from her nuptial union spring?

HER. Hence these distempers of the soul arise,  
 And well do you anticipate my words.

ORE. Enamoured with another, is thy lord  
 False to thy bed?

HER. He loves a captive dame,  
 The wife of Hector.

ORE. This of which thou speak'st  
 Is a great evil, when one man possesses  
 Two wives.

HER. 'Twas thus, till I avenged the wrong.

ORE. Didst thou with arts familiar to thy sex  
 Plot 'gainst thy rival's life?

HER. I would have killed  
 Her and her spurious son.

ORE. Hast thou despatched them?  
 Or were they screened from their impending fate?

HER. Old Peleus to these worthless objects showed  
 Too great a reverence.

ORE. Was there any friend  
 Ready to aid thee in the purposed slaughter?

HER. My sire, who for this cause from Sparta came.

ORE. Yet by that aged man was he subdued?

HER. Abashed he fled, and left me here alone.

ORE. I understand thee well: thy husband's wrath  
 Thou fear'st for what thou'st done.

HER.

The fact you know :

Hence justly will he take away my life.  
 What can be said? yet by immortal Jove,  
 Our grandsire, I conjure you, send me far  
 From these domains, or to my father's house.  
 Had but these walls a voice, they would proclaim  
 The sentence of my exile, for the land  
 Of Phthia hates me. If my lord return  
 From Phœbus' oracle, for the misdeeds  
 I have committed, he will strike me dead,  
 Or force me to become that harlot's slave  
 Whom erst I ruled.

ORE.

By some will it be asked  
 Whence then into such errors didst thou fall?

HER. My ruin I derive from the admission  
 Of these vile women, who inflamed my pride  
 By uttering these rash words : " Wilt thou endure  
 Beneath thy roof that odious slave who shares  
 Thy bridal couch? by Juno, awful queen,  
 I would not suffer such a wretch to breathe  
 In my polluted chamber." When I heard  
 The language uttered by these crafty sirens,  
 Artificers of mischief, who, to suit  
 Their purpose, in persuasive strains displayed  
 The power of eloquence, I was puffed up  
 With folly : for what need had I to hold  
 My lord in reverence while possessed of all  
 That I could wish? abundant wealth was mine,  
 O'er these abodes I reigned, and any children  
 I to my husband might hereafter bare  
 Would be legitimate ; but hers, by mine  
 In strict subjection held, a spurious race.  
 But never, never (I this truth repeat)  
 Should wedded men, who have the gift of reason,  
 Let women have a free access, and visit  
 Their consort. For they teach her evil lessons :  
 Urged by the hopes of lucre, one corrupts  
 Her chastity ; a second hath already  
 Transgressed herself, and wishes that her friend  
 May be as vicious : many by their lust  
 Are led astray : hence to their husband's house  
 A train of mischief rises. Guard the doors  
 Of your abodes with locks and massive bars ;  
 Since from the intrusion of these female guests,  
 No good, but mischiefs numberless ensue.

CHOR. Thou to thy tongue hast given too free a  
 scope

In thus assailing the whole female race :  
 Thy present woes indeed our pardon claim ;

Yet every woman is in duty bound  
To gloss o'er the misconduct of her sex.

ORE. Wisdom pertained to him who taught mankind  
To hear the reasons by both parties urged  
In a debate. Aware of the confusion  
In these abodes, and of the strife 'twixt thee  
And Hector's wife, I stayed not to observe  
Whether thou in this house wouldst still remain,  
Or through a fear of yonder captive dame  
Abandon it : I therefore hither came,  
Nor waited for intelligence from thee.  
And if a satisfactory account  
Of thy proceedings thou to me canst give,  
I will convey thee hence. For thou, who erst  
Wert mine, with this thy present husband liv'st,  
Through the perfidious conduct of thy sire,  
Who ere he entered the domains of Troy  
Affianced thee to me, and then to him  
Who now possesses thee, again engaged,  
If he the Phrygian city should subdue.  
But I forgive thy father for this wrong,  
When hither great Achilles' son returned,  
And to the bridegroom sued that he would loose  
Thy plighted hand ; of all my various fortunes  
Informing him, and of my present woes ;  
How feasible it were for me to wed  
Among my friends, but that for such an exile  
As I am, driven from my paternal throne,  
'Twould not be easy to obtain a consort  
In any foreign land : on this he grew  
More arrogant, and bitterly reproached me  
Both with my mother's murder, and those Furies  
Whose blood-stained visages inspire dismay.  
By the misfortunes of my house bowed down  
To earth, I grieved indeed, but grieving bore  
The weight of these calamities, and reft  
Of thee my bride, reluctantly departed.  
But since thy fortunes now have undergone  
A change so unexpected, and involved  
In woe, thou stand'st aghast ; from these abodes  
Thee will I take and to thy sire convey.  
For wondrous is the force of kindred ties ;  
And in misfortunes nought exceeds the friend  
Who from the self-same house derives his birth.

HER. My father will take care how to dispose  
Of me in marriage, nor is it my province  
Such question to decide. But, O convey me  
From these loathed mansions with the utmost speed,  
Lest when my husband at his first return

Enters the doors, he intercept my flight ;  
Or, hearing that I leave his grandson's house,  
Pelex pursue me with his rapid steeds.

ORE. Be of good cheer against that aged man,  
And from thy furious lord, Achilles' son,  
Who treated me with scorn, fear nought ; this hand  
Hath with such cautious artifice prepared  
For him th' inevitable snares of death,  
Of which no previous mention will I make ;  
But when it is accomplished, this exploit  
Shall on the rock of Delphi be proclaimed.  
I who my mother slew, if th' armed friends  
Whom I have station'd in the Pythian realm  
Observe their oaths, will teach him that he ought  
To have abstained from wedding any dame  
Betrothed to me. He in an evil hour  
Shall claim atonement for his father's death  
Of Phœbus mighty king ; nor shall repentance  
For these audacious blasphemies avail  
To save the miscreant on whose impious head  
Apollo wreaks just vengeance ; by his wrath  
O'ertaken, and entangled in my snares,  
He wretchedly shall perish. For the gods  
Subvert the prosperous fortunes of their foes  
Nor suffer pride to rear her towering crest.

[*Exeunt ORESTES and HERMIONE.*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Phœbus, thou god who with a mound  
Of stately towers didst Ilion's rock surround ;  
And thou, O Neptune, ruler of the main,  
Borne swiftly by thy azure steeds  
In a light car, who cleav'st the watery plain ;  
After exerting with unwearied toil  
Such skill as human works exceeds,  
'Gainst wretched Troy when Mars his javelin bore,  
Why, faithless to that chosen soil,  
Left ye your city drenched in gore ?

I. 2.

The steeds ye yoked on Simois' banks  
Whirled many a chariot through the broken ranks ;  
No hero gathered in that stubborn fray  
One laurel to adorn his head :  
Phrygia's illustrious rulers swept away,



Took their last voyage to a distant shore,  
 And mingled with the vulgar dead,  
 While the polluted altars ceased to gleam  
 Upwafting to the skies no more  
 Their frankincense in odorous steam.

## II. 1.

Slain by his wife Atrides fell ;  
 His furious son sent to the shades of Hell  
 The murderess, and returned th' unnatural deed,  
 That fatal stroke the god approved,  
 His oracles ordained that she should bleed,  
 When young Orestes at the inmost shrine  
 Was by a heavenly impulse moved,  
 His hands in gore maternal to imbrue.  
 O Phœbus, O thou power divine,  
 How shall I think th' assertion true ?

## II. 2.

In Greece doth many a dame complain  
 Chaunting rude dirges for her children slain ;  
 Others their native land reluctant leave,  
 And to a foreign lord are brought.  
 Nor yet hast thou alone just cause to grieve,  
 Nor to thy friends hath Heaven's peculiar hate  
 These signal miseries wrought :  
 Victorious Greece still feels as deep a wound,  
 From whence the thunderbolt of fate  
 Through Phrygia scattered deaths around.

## PELEUS, CHORUS.

PEL. Answer my questions, O ye Phthian dames,  
 For doubtful is the rumour I have heard,  
 That Menelaus' daughter, when she left  
 This house departed from the realm. I come  
 Anxious to learn if this account be true.  
 For 'tis their duty who remain at home  
 To guard the fortunes of their absent friends.

CHOR. What thou hast heard, O Peleus, is the truth,  
 And ill would it become me to conceal  
 The woes in which I deeply am involved :  
 Our royal mistress from these walls is fled.

PEL. What feared she ? say.

CHOR. The anger of her lord,  
 Lest he from these abodes should cast her forth.

PEL. Because she plotted to have slain the boy ?

CHOR. E'en so it was. Yon captive too she dreaded,

PEL. But from these mansions did she go, attended,  
 Or by her father or by whom ?



CHOR.                                The son  
Of Agamemnon from this land conveyed her.

PEL. What are his views? to take her for his bride?

CHOR. Thy grandson too he meditates to slay.

PEL. Stationed in secret ambush, or resolved  
To meet the dauntless warrior face to face?

CHOR. Beneath Apollo's unpolluted fane  
With Delphi's citizens.

PEL. Atrocious crime !  
Ah me ! will no one with his utmost speed  
Go to the altar of the Pythian god,  
And to our friends disclose what passes here,  
Ere by his foes Achilles' son is slain ?

MESSANGER, PELEUS, CHORUS.

MES. What evil tidings do I bring to you,  
O aged man, and all my master's friends !

PEL. By a sad presage which affects my soul  
I of th' impending evil am forewarned.

MEG. Know then, O Peleus, that your wretched grand-on  
Is now no more, with such unnumbered wounds  
He by the Delphic citizens transpierced,  
And by that stranger from Mycene died.

CHOR. Alas ! alas ! but what resource is left  
For thee, thou hoary veteran ? do not fall ;  
Raise thyself up.

PEL. To very nothing now  
Am I reduced, I utterly am ruined:  
The power of speech deserts me, and these limbs  
Forget their office.

MES. Hear me, and from earth  
Arise, if, with th' assistance of your friends,  
You for this murder wish to be revenged.

PEL. How hast thou compassed wretched me, who stand  
On the last verge of spiritless old age,  
O cruel fate ! say how the only son  
Of my deceased, my only son, was slain.  
These tidings though unwelcome would I hear.

MES. After we reached Apollo's sacred realm,  
While thrice the chariot of the sun performed  
Its bright career, we satiated our eyes  
With viewing all around. The circumstance  
Which raised suspicion first, was this : the people  
Who dwell within the temple of the god  
Held frequent meetings, and in crowds assembled.  
Meanwhile the son of Agamemnon went  
Through the whole city, and in every ear  
Whispered malignant words like these : " Behold

Him who is visiting the hallowed shrine  
Of Phœbus piled with gold, the treasures given  
By all mankind ; the miscreant comes again  
On the same purpose which first drew him hither,  
To overthrow the temple of the god.”  
Through the whole city hence an evil rumour  
Went forth, and all the magistrates, to whom  
The holy treasures were consigned, assembled,  
In secret councils held, and placed a guard  
Behind the massive columns in the fane.  
We, unapprized of this, meantime had caught  
Some sheep, that fed amid Parnassus’ grove,  
And with our Delphic friends and Pythian seers  
Approached the altar : some one said : “ Young man,  
What vows on thy behalf shall we address  
To Phœbus ? for what purpose art thou come ? ”  
He answered : “ To the god I wish to make  
A due atonement for my past offence,  
Because I erst from him with impious tongue  
Claimed satisfaction for my father’s blood.”  
Hence did Orestes’ calumnies appear  
To have great weight, suggesting that my lord  
Spoke an untruth, and that he hither came  
With vile designs. Beneath the holy roof,  
That to Apollo he might offer up  
His prayers in that oracular abode,  
He now advanced, and as they blazed, observed  
The victims : here a troop with falchions armed  
Screened by the branching laurels stood ; the son  
Of Clytemnestra was the sole contriver  
Of all these stratagems. Our lord stood forth,  
And, in the sight of this insidious band,  
Adored the god : while they with their keen swords,  
Ere he discerned them, pierced Achilles’ son  
Unsheathed in mail. He instantly retreated ;  
For he as yet had by no deadly wound  
Been smitten ; but snatched up in his retreat  
Those glittering arms which near the portals hung,  
And stood a champion terrible to view,  
Close to the blazing altar : with loud voice  
He questioned the inhabitants of Delphi :  
“ Me who a pious votary hither come,  
Why, or for what offences, would ye slay ! ”  
Although the number of his foes was great,  
None of them answered, but all hands hurled stones :  
On every side assaulted by a storm  
Thick as the falling snows, he warded off,  
Extending the broad margin of his shield,  
Each missile weapon : but of no avail

Was this resistance : for the spear, the shaft,  
 The dart, were thrown at once, and at his feet  
 Mixed instruments of sacrifice lay scattered.  
 Th' agility with which your grandson shunned  
 The blows they aimed, was wondrous to behold :  
 They in a circle gathering round, closed in,  
 Nor gave him space to breathe, till from the altar  
 Descending with a leap like that which bore  
 The hapless Grecian chief to Phrygia's coast,  
 He rushed among them : like a flock of doves  
 Who see the hawk appear, they turned and fled :  
 In heaps on heaps promiscuous, many fell,  
 Some in the narrow passage wounded lay,  
 While others o'er them trampled, and their groans  
 Unholy echoed through the hallowed dome.  
 But, tranquil as the waters in a calm,  
 In golden arms my lord resplendent stood,  
 Till from the inmost sanctuary burst forth  
 A deep-toned voice of horror, which impelled  
 The recreant warriors to renew the fight :  
 Achilles' son then smitten through the flank  
 With a keen sword, by one of Delphi fell,  
 Who slew him, yet ignobly, with the aid  
 Of multitudes. But after he to earth  
 Was fallen, what sword transpierced him not, what hand  
 Threw not a stone to smite him ? his whole frame,  
 So graceful erst, was with unnumbered wounds  
 Disfigured : till at length his mangled corse,  
 Which stained the altar's basis, from the fane  
 Drenched with the blood of victims they cast forth.  
 But gathering up with speed, his loved remains  
 To you we bear, O venerable man,  
 That o'er them you may shed the plenteous tear,  
 And grace them with sepulchral rites. Thus Phœbus,  
 Who prophesies to others, mighty king,  
 And deals out justice to th' admiring world,  
 Hath on Achilles' son revenged himself,  
 And, like some worthless human foe, revived  
 An ancient grudge : how then can he be wise ?

[*ENTR* MESSENGER.

CHOR. But lo ! our royal master, from the land  
 Of Delphi borne, approaches these abodes !  
 Wretched was he, by such untimely doom  
 O'ertaken : nor art thou, O aged man,  
 Less wretched than the slaughtered youth : for thou  
 Into thy doors receiv'st Achilles' son,  
 But not as thou couldst wish ; thou too art fallen  
 Into affliction's snare.

PEL.

What piteous object,

Ah me ! do I behold, and with these hands  
 Receive into my house ! we are undone,  
 We are undone, O thou Thessalian city ;  
 I have no children, no descendants left,  
 To occupy these mansions. On what friend  
 Shall I a wretched sufferer turn my eyes,  
 And hope to find relief ? O thou dear face,  
 Ye cheeks, ye hands ! thee would to Heaven that fate  
 In those embattled fields of Troy had slain  
 Beside the waves of Simois !

CHOR. He in death  
 Hence would have found renown ; thou too, old man,  
 Wouldst have been happier.

PEL. Thou, O wedlock, wedlock,  
 These mansions and my city hast o'erthrown.  
 My grandson, through the inauspicious nuptials  
 By thee contracted, would to heaven my gates  
 Had ne'er received that execrable fiend  
 Hermione, thy bane ! O had she first  
 With thunderbolts been smitten ! nor hadst thou,  
 Presumptuous mortal, charged the Delphic god  
 With having aimed the shaft which slew thy sire !

CHOR. I will awake the sad funereal dirge,  
 And wailing pay to my departed lord  
 Such customary tribute as attends  
 The shades of mighty chiefs,

PEL. Ah me ! at once  
 With misery and old age bowed down to earth,  
 I shed th' incessant tear.

CHOR. Thus hath the god  
 Ordained, the god's vindictive arm hath wrought  
 All these calamities.

PEL. O most beloved,  
 This house, ah me ! a desert hast thou left,  
 And me a miserable old man made childless.

CHOR. Before thy children, O thou aged man,  
 Thou shouldst have died.

PEL. Shall I not rend my hair,  
 And beat with desperate hands this hoary head ?  
 O city ! Phœbus hath of both my sons  
 Deprived me.

CHOR. O thou miserable old man,  
 What evils hast thou witnessed and endured !  
 How wilt thou pass the remnant of thy life ?

PEL. Childless, forlorn, no period to my woes  
 Can I discover, but till death must drink  
 The bitter potion.

CHOR. Sure the gods in vain  
 Showered blessings on thy nuptials,

PEL. Fled and withered  
Is all our ancient pomp.

CHOR. Alone thou mov'st  
Around thy lonely house.

PEL. I have no city.  
Thee, O my sceptre, to the ground I cast,  
And from yon dreary caverns of the main,  
Daughter of Nereus, me wilt thou behold  
Utterly ruined, grovelling in the dust.

CHOR. Ha! who was it that moved? what form divine  
Do I perceive? look there! ye nymphs, attend,  
With rapid passage through the fleecy clouds  
Borne onward, some divinity arrives  
At Phthia's pastures, famed for generous steeds.

THETIS, PELEUS, CHORUS.

THE. O Peleus, mindful of the ties which bound  
Our plighted love, I hither from the house  
Of Nereus come, and with these wholesome counsels  
Begin; despair not, though thy present woes  
Are grievous: for e'en I who should have borne  
A race of children such as ne'er might cause  
My tears to stream, have lost the son who crowned  
Our hopes, Achilles, swift of foot, the first  
Of Grecian heroes. But to thee, the motives  
Which brought me hither, will I now relate;  
O listen to my voice. Back to that altar  
Devoted to the Pythian god, convey  
This body of Achilles' slaughtered son,  
And bury it; so shall his tomb declare  
The murderous violence Orestes' band  
Committed: but yon captive dame, I mean  
Andromache, on Helenus bestowed  
In marriage, in Molossia's land must dwell,  
And her young son, the only royal branch  
Which of the stem of Æacus remains;  
From him in long succession shall a race  
Of happy kings Molossia's sceptre wield:  
Nor will our progeny, O aged man,  
Be utterly extinct, when blended thus  
With Ilion, still protected by the gods.  
Though by Minerva's stratagems it fell.  
But, as for thee, that thou mayst know the blessing  
Of having wedded me, who am by birth  
A goddess and the daughter of a god,  
From all the ills which wait on human life  
Releasing, thee immortal will I make  
And incorruptible; with me a goddess  
In Nereus' watery mansions thou a god

Hereafter shalt reside, and from the waves  
 Emerging with dry feet, behold our son  
 Achilles, to his parents justly dear,  
 Inhabiting that isle whose chalky coasts  
 Are laved by the surrounding Euxine deep.  
 But go to Delphi's city by the gods  
 Erected, thither bear this weltering corse,  
 And when thou hast interred it, to this land  
 Return, and in that cave which through the rock  
 Of Sepia time hath worn, thy station keep  
 Till from the waves I with my sister choir  
 The fifty Nereids come, to bear thee hence.  
 Thou must endure the woes imposed by fate,  
 For thus hath Jove ordained. But cease to grieve  
 For the deceased: for by the righteous gods  
 The same impartial sentence is awarded  
 To the whole human race, and death's a debt  
 Which all must pay.

PEL. Hail, venerable dame,  
 Daughter of Nereus, my illustrious wife :  
 For what thou dost is worthy of thyself,  
 And of thy progeny. I cease to grieve  
 At thy command, O goddess, and will go,  
 Soon as my grandson's corse I have interred,  
 To Pelion's cave, where first thy beauteous form  
 I in these arms received. The man whose choice  
 Is by discretion guided, should select  
 A consort nobly born, and give his daughters  
 To those of virtuous families, nor wish  
 To wed a damsel sprung from worthless sires,  
 Though to his house a plenteous dower she bring :  
 So shall he ne'er incur the wrath of Heaven.

CHOR. A thousand shapes our varying fates assume,  
 The gods perform what we could least expect,  
 And oft the things for which we fondly hoped  
 Come not to pass : but Heaven still finds a clue  
 To guide our steps through life's perplexing maze.  
 And thus does this important business end.







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